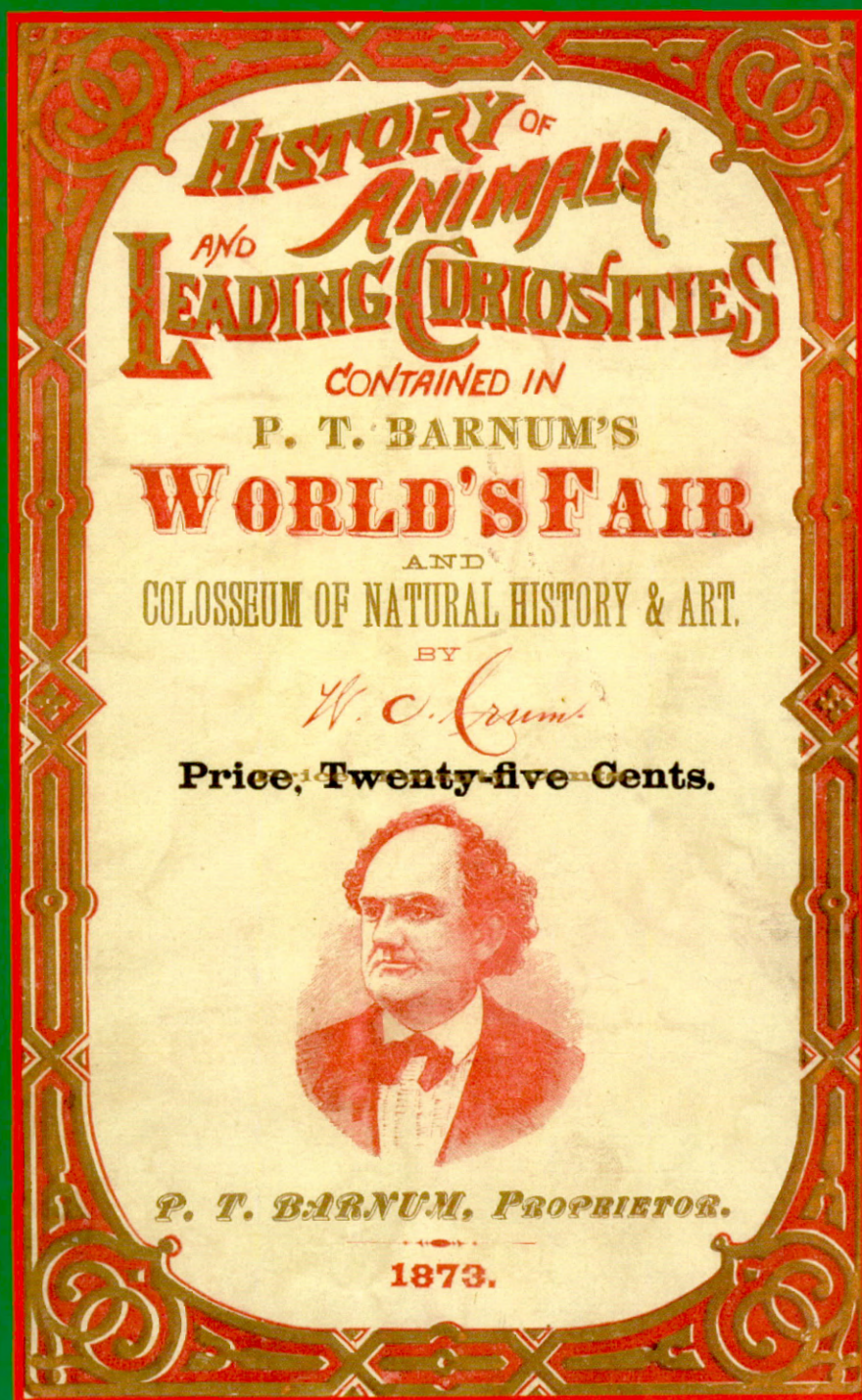


Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

MARCH-APRIL 2008



BANDWAGON

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FRED D. PFENING, JR.

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

MARCH-APRIL 2008

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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THE FRONT COVER

This seventy-eight page animal book was issued in 1873, the third year of the Barnum show. The P. T. Barnum World's Fair was very successful that season and produced a profit of \$1,000,000.

The two ring show was illustrated on back cover. Pfening Archives.

DUES NOTICES

The Circus Historical Society dues and subscription notices for 2008 will be mailed by the end of April.

Please do not send your payment to the Treasurer before you receive your regular dues envelope.

CORRECTION

The photo of a clown on page 90 of the November-December 2007 *Bandwagon* was identified as Johnny Peers. This was not correct. The photo is of a Habebe, another clown on the show.

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1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Nov.-Dec.
1974-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.
1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-All available.
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.
1980-1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-2007-All available.

In addition to above many other issues are available going back to the 1960s. If you are in need of early issues write to the Editor.

Price is \$4.00 each. Add \$2.50 postage for one issue, \$5.00 for more than one issue. Please select substitutes in case we are out of any of above.

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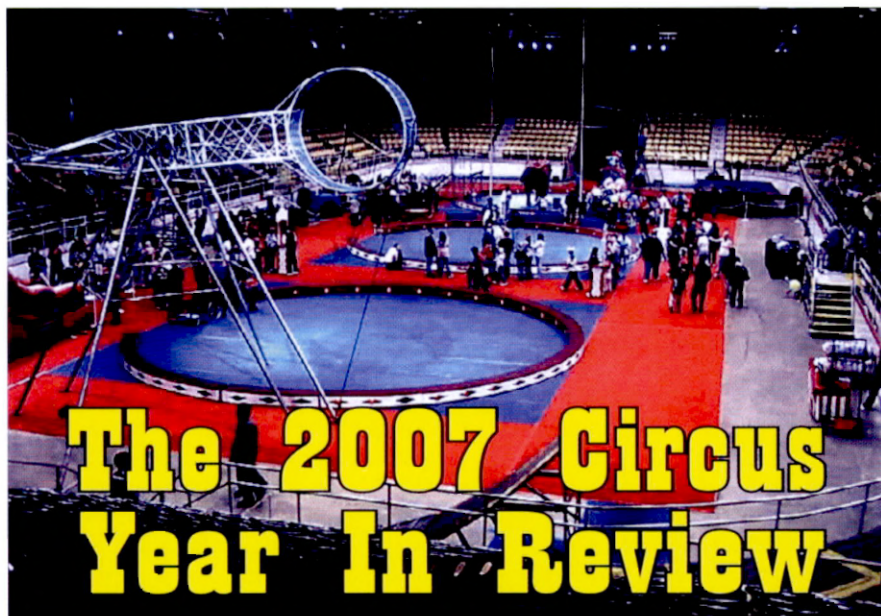
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By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

The circus season of 2007 turned out to be slightly better than in 2006, for most shows, but for not all. Significant events included a return to the traditional three rings by the Ringling-Barnum Red Unit; Kelly-Miller touring under the ownership of John Ringling North II; and Circus Chimera closing in mid-season. An independent circus in Canada completed its second season and promptly declared bankruptcy. A circus opened and closed the same day early in the year. Cirque du Soleil opened a new tented show and a winter show in the Madison Square Garden Theater. A new director of the Circus World Museum produced a financial turn-around success. Two well-known and well-liked circus owners graduated to the big lot. The United States Congress dropped a bomb on circuses when it failed to extend the exemption of H2B covering seasonal foreign workers, effectively limiting the number of foreigners available to circuses. Fewer shows published programs.

Three-ring under-canvas shows waned. Only Carson & Barnes and the two Gopher Davenport shows sported three rings. Traditional Shrine circus producers owned European style big tops for outdoor dates, including Struppi Hanneford, Serge Coronas, Tarzan Zerbini and Joe Bauer. They sometimes rented

Garden Bros. Circus in Dayton, Ohio. John Wells photo.

their tents to other producers. Jorge Barreta and Alain Zerbini also rented their European tents to others. The free kids coupons continued to be widely used, although they were becoming less effective each year.

The smaller truck shows hired families doing multiple acts for their performances. Many of them were from Mexico. About all of them presented hula hoops, juggling and rola bola. Many included a motorcycle globe act, space wheel and Russian swing in their repertoire.

The Feld organization reappraised the success of the open arena 2006 Blue Unit and went back to the three-ring format that had been a hallmark of the Greatest Show on Earth for scores of years.

The 137th edition was built around Bello Nock and was titled Bellobration. The show opened in Tampa on January 3. Jon Griggs was manager and Tyron McFarlan was ringmaster. The performance was pre-

sented in three inflatable black rings. New to the show was a wild animal cage that dropped from the ceiling, which was quickly raised following the act. Trainer Tatayara Antonio Maluenda presented twelve cats that had been trained by Lance Ramos. Alberto and Maurico Aguilar worked on two high wires, jumping from one to the other. Bello Nock and Paulo Rodriguez worked a space wheel that split into two wheels, counter rotating, on the same axel.

Bello Nock presented a typical sway pole act with Erendira Wallenda. The Poema Family, with eight people, worked a flying act with two riggings placed end to end. Brian and Tina were both fired from a double cannon. Dog acts were presented by Angelica. Margarita, Stanislav Zotova, and the Olate family. Bello Nock worked a teeterboard act. The Zunyi Acrobats, eighteen in number, presented a typical oriental fan routine and contortion. Other acts included Viktor Bako's BMX bike act, a large teeterboard act,

Bello on the sway pole. Feld Entertainment photo.





Kenneth Feld, CEO Feld Entertainment. Feld Entertainment photo.

Sylvio and Stefi Schwichtenberg, liberty act with zebras, and a large elephant number.

The performance was enthusiastically received by reviewers and fans alike. Buckles Woodcock, who had not cared for recent Ringling shows, declared it the best show in fifteen years. When the Red Unit moved to the second stand in Orlando it traveled on 58 cars, 33 coaches, 4 stocks, 2 container, 1 bi-level and 18 flats. During the Madison Square Garden engagement someone sold Bello's 15-inch tall bicycle resulting in lots of publicity. The bike was found by

Alana and Kenneth Feld as the Red unit elephants arrive at Madison Square Garden. Paul Gutheil photo.



Rocky Robinson who received a \$1,000 reward. The show played in 15 states from Florida to California,

The Ringling-Barnum Blue Unit opened in Miami, Florida on January 3. The performance was basically the same as in 2006. The unit traveled on 59 cars, 35 coaches, 4 stocks, 2 container and 18 flats. Madam Shamsheeva and her dogs exited the show in mid-season, a rare occurrence on a Ringling show.

While the Blue unit was in Albany, New York April 26-29 an interesting article appeared in the *Albany Times Union*. It told of Michael Vaughn, king of the Pie Car, number 181 on the train. When the train was moving the pie car was open 24 hours a day. Vaughn supervised the production of up to 1,500 meals a week for performers and production staff. He and his six-member crew ran a restaurant that only had regular customers. He said he didn't care who wanted fries he would never use the deep fryer while the train was moving. Vaughn also ran Pie Car Jr., a 22-foot wagon in the backyard of the building.

While the Blue show was in Bridgeport, Connecticut in October the Torres family seven person motorcycle globe act crashed. On one of the first turns two bikes collided. While the two were trying to right them the other five circled above them. The routine was resumed, but another collision



occurred and all seven cycles landed in the bottom of the globe. The Blue Unit played in 16 states plus Washington D.C.

The Gold Unit's 2007 tour began in Ft. Myers, Florida on January 2. It played Sarasota from January

16-23. The show's advertising touted the return of Ringling to its old winter quarters city after many years. The show did boffo business throughout the stand. The low ceiling in Roberts Arena did not allow the flying act to work. Patty Zerbini with her large elephant was the hit of the performance.

Other acts were Los Scolas, high wire; Linda Aunolo, cloud swing; Vicenta Pages, tigers; Stanislav and Vasily Trifonov, comedy sway pole; Valentin Dinov and Borislava Vaneva, perch act; Javie Scola and William Curzado, double space wheel; Gail Mirabella, dogs; clown Mitch Fredde; Javier and James Castro and Rafeal, high wire; Ikar Troupe, acrobatics and teeterboard; Alex Petrov and Vicki Zsilal, aerial up-side-down act. Jon Weiss left the show at the end of the season.

Sylvani Zerbini on Ringling Gold. Don Curtis photo.

The Gold Unit played in 20 states from Florida to Washington state. It traveled on eight semi-trailers. It closed the season in Dayton, Ohio the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. The route of the show covered 35,000 miles in 92 cities.

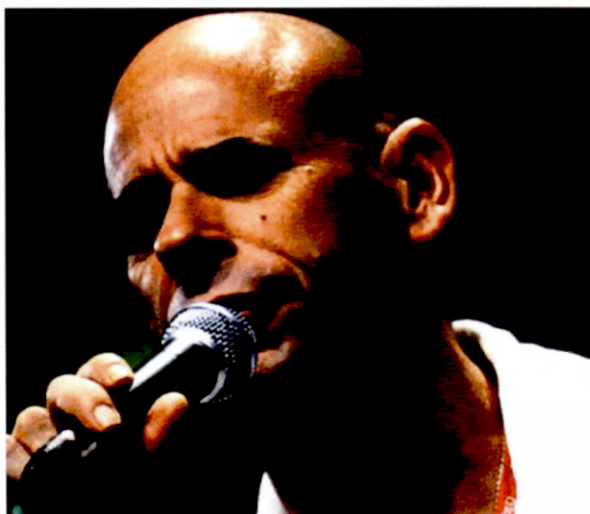
On August 23 Ringling-Barnum derailed a lawsuit brought by the Humane Society of the United States alleging cruel treatment of its elephants. A judge ruled that all of Ringling's performing elephants were exempt from provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The judge ruled that 21 of the younger elephants were exempt because they were born in captivity as part of the show's Florida-based breeding program.

On October 3 Feld Entertainment named Nicole Feld and Alana Feld Executive Vice Presidents of the company. Nicole joined the company in 2001 after being with *People* magazine. Alana joined the company in 2003 after working for advertising and marketing agencies. The Feld Foundation donated \$200,000 to The Duke Ellington School of the Arts on November 8. The donation benefited the Technical Theater Department of the school. The International Conference on Sports and Entertainment Business announced on November 16 that Feld Entertainment, Inc. was the recipient of the Outstanding Corporate Partner in Sport and Entertainment Award.

At age 47 Cirque du Soleil owner Guy Laliberte was the most successful showman in circus history. Both financially and artistically his circus holdings far exceeded those who came ahead of him. In August *Forbes* magazine listed Laliberte worth 1.5 billion dollars. He traveled in a Bombardier Global Express XRS, one of the most luxurious, most accomplished business jets ever built.

Cirque du Soleil's tented shows toured the world in 2007. Alegria played London; Barcelona; Saint-Denis, France; and Gijon, Spain. Corteo played in Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Columbus, Denver, Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego. Quidam played Dubai, UAE;

Guy Laliberte, the master-mind of Cirque du Soleil. Soleil photo.



Seoul, South Korea; Shanghai, China; Monterrey, and Mexico City, Mexico. Varekai played Auckland, New Zealand; Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, Australia; Antwerp, Belgium; London, and Amsterdam. Kooza played Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Minneapolis, San Francisco and San Jose.

Resident shows were LaNouba, Orlando, Florida. Las Vegas shows included Mystere at the Treasure Island Hotel; "O" at the Bellagio Hotel; Zumanity at the New York-New York Hotel; KA at the MGM Grand Hotel and Love at the Mirage Hotel.

Cirque du Soleil announced on March 22 that its sixth permanent show in Las Vegas would be at the Luxor Hotel featuring magician Criss Angel. The production will be the first to feature a star performer.

In July Laliberte became one of six final poker players in the WPT world championship tournament held at the Bellagio Hotel. He stood at #4 with \$4,690,000 in winnings. Unfortunately he did not win the tournament. For coming in fourth place he received a \$696,229 payout.

In 2007 Laliberte again reached into his enormous treasure-trove of talent to bring new productions to the public. A new traveling tent show opened in Montreal on May 3. While producers imitated the Soleil style Laliberte's new production contained more traditional circus acts. The show combined acrobatic performance and the art of clowning. The new show was titled Kooza. Clown David Shiner wrote and directed the production. The fifty performers included the Quiros, high wire act; Anthony Gaeto's space wheel; the Mystic Pixies, contortion

group; Zhang Gongil, chair balancing; and single and double stilts.

Dave Hammarstrom reviewed Kooza: "San Francisco, November 19 at 4 p.m. \$55.00 to \$210.00 top. To follow the phenomenal success of Cirque du Soleil is to wonder how long it can last and what changes it might be willing to make in the years ahead to stay in the black. The good news here is that Kooza, Guy Laliberte's latest touring show, takes a few giant leaps backwards in time to a more authentic big top experience. May we say goodbye for good, Corteo? I can't recall a previous edition of Cirque as powerful as this one is in its redemptive second half.



Contortion act on Kooza. Soleil photo.

"Getting there takes a little time and patience. The gorgeous tent itself remains a temple of heightened atmosphere and mystery. During come-in, a delightfully wacky trio of older fashioned character clowns (stress character) led by Canadian Gordon White are fun to watch. They will specialize at extended intervals throughout the program in a line of slapstick and toilet humor that can seem as much filler as worthy comedic invention. And their ring time adds to the impression of a variety show with circus acts rather than a cirque du ballet. This comes as something of a promising relief.

"Cirque's stated aim in this newest touring unit (no proper Cirque will dare leave home without one) has something to do with The Innocent, a 'naive but charming clown striving to find his place in the world,' and

the exploration of 'fear, identity, recognition and power.' I read that in the program, but from the show itself, what I remember the most were a handful of gifted performers who thrilled me--as they obviously they did everybody else in the near full house--doing things that trump all such pretentious rhetoric.

"The opening segments bear familiar Cirque markings--misty allusions to another world being reached, ensemble choreography, the use of mechanics and the sketchy maneuvers of those who use them (rotating globes and a single trap aerialist). And you wonder, has nothing much changed in the Montreal mind set? A couple of acts ahead, it most certainly has. Enter a troupe of high wire daredevils who break through the veneer with dashing realism, working on two wires, one above the other. They are from Columbia and Spain--Ftoubert Sanchez (Pinpon) and the brothers Dominguez, Roberto Quiros, Angel Quiros, Vicente Quiros and Angel Vittarejo. Together, they generate real excitement dancing and cavorting aloft. A net is efficiently extended below them, and that's the commendable way to add safety. Our wire walkers proceed with balancing poles to execute a perfect three-man pyramid on two bicycles. Thus, they deliver Cirque du Soleil from its chronic deference to hard hats and practice mechanics. Can Laliberte break the habit? Evidently so. I told you there is good news here.

"Really, to be honest, up until the wire guys come on just before intermission, not a lot has happened. And I found myself wondering, will that be all that there is to be?

"Then came the second half, delivering a pair of absolutely sensational history making performances, one a drop-dead thriller in the air, the other, a riveting display of juggling genius the likes of which you have probably never before seen. Go there to see it.

"The thriller: Two guys from Colombia (is Colombia becoming the world center of circus thrills?) named Jimmy Ibarra Zapata and Carlos Enrique Marin Loaiza who work a double wheel of death in the most recklessly accomplished fash-

ion. I have never ever seen this rig exploited so dangerously and with such gut-grabbing bravado. Zapata and Loaiza are outrageously daring. Stars. Stars. Stars. May I repeat their names--Zapata and Loaiza. They had the crowd gasping like roller coaster fanatics. Remember the word spine-tingling? Here it applies.

"Second highpoint worth a trip to this tent: A juggler so incredibly accomplished, powering through a repertoire of tricks and not making a single error, as to leave me wondering in joy: is he the greatest I have seen since I first beheld the great Francis Brunn many years ago in my boyhood? He probably is. Mesmerizing through and through. Monte Carlo should just send him the gold, no questions asked, no appearances necessary. Who is he? Of course, he is not announced, and in the program where every artist gets the same tiny space for a mug shot (shame on you, Cirque, for such miserly credit-giving), I learn that I have just witnessed the work of Anthony Gatto. Star. Star. Star.



The teeterboard act on Kooza. Soleil photo.

"These breath-taking turns are what give the otherwise meandering Kooza an edge and a purpose. There are a number of other artists, to be sure, who demonstrate agility and polish and add a degree of pleasure to the mix: a group of intrepidly nimble contortionists; an acrobatic duo of persuasive agility; another pair who ride a bicycle inventively, combining romantic flirtations with nimble acrobatics; a guy from Sweden of all places named Michael Halvarson

who mines comedy magic with a sly pick-pocketing turn using a shill from the crowd. All nice enough stuff.

"Overall, however, curiously Kooza suffers from the uneasy convergence of dispirit forces competing for attention--the star circus acts who will not be reduced to stick figures in a Cirque mist; the bickering clowns who consume too much ring time, some of it courtesy of audience volunteers (who, for all I know, could be shills); the so called 'story,' and Cirque's lingering compulsion to produce its signature atmosphere. Director-writer David Shiner has not succeeded in merging these elements into an embracing aesthetic unity. In this department, Kooza is no match for the memorable Varakei, so the audience must settle for a pleasant ersatz Vegas variety format.

"Shiner's writerly vision lacks rhythm, and the production lacks pacing and sharper transitions. Given Cirque's unlimited resources, prop changes that take time should

not. The narrative premise is realized in fits and starts, although the plight of The Innocent is charmingly essayed by Stephan Landry who rings a little pathos in the end when he is left alone with only his kite after the circus gypsies have disappeared into a dark mist of closure.

"Music follows action faithfully, which means that we get many different sounds and styles from ethnic to jazz, yet most of it relevant and engaging and a welcome change from the operatic scores of the past. My biggest complaint is as much a wish: There could and should have been more content here. A couple of the acts listed in the program--a duo single trap turn and a Chinese chair balancer--did not appear; perhaps that would have done the trick. Cirque's billionaire big top boss has all the money he needs, and still he uses sponsors. And now he has eliminated the free water stations on the lot. The impression he conveys is of a filthy rich producer with a serious greed prob-

lem. Not a pretty impression.

"At least Mr. Laliberte has shown a stomach for the authentic artistry that thrills a house time and time again. And he may have no other choice in order to stay in business but to give the public the circus it expects--no matter the format, no matter the dry ice formula. Overall Grade: 3 stars.

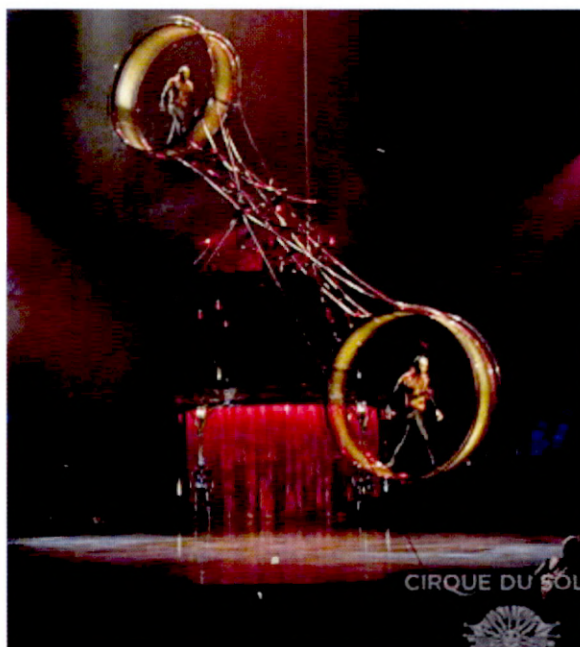
"5 comments: Anonymous said . . . the high wire performers named Quiro have been featured with Ringling, Beatty-Cole and numerous other major shows both here and in Europe; they came to Cirque as star wirewalkers. I don't know anything about the wheel act but one's middle name is Ibarra, which would indicate a relationship with the Ibarras, who had a great aerial bar act on Ringling many years ago and also had flying acts. This would indicate they too, came to Cirque as stars. But I have to give Cirque a great deal of credit for taking many people with no circus background and creating acts that are superior to any similar acts anywhere else. If the people who hire performers for other major shows had any sense, they would regularly hire Cirque performers. Unless it's (a) too much trouble when you can hire other acts cheaper or (b) Cirque pays performers more than most other shows and they don't have to supply their own rigging, costumes, etc. however, like even the Ringling and Beatty-Cole of the past, Cirque has star acts and filler acts that are not so great as the star acts. I buy every Cirque dvd just to see those acts that are great and have been very impressed. Cirque also trains performers in little things like style. How many times have we seen big-time acts who don't even know how to do jazz hands when they style?"

An announcement was made on April 24 that Soleil had contracted with Madison Square Garden to produce a show in the 4,500 seat Garden theater. Titled Wintuk, it played from November 1 to January 6, 2008. The family oriented production included a bicycle act; rope spinning; skateboarding; low-flying trapeze; and slack wire.

The show was playful, musical, and bursting with the energy of the

city and the broad sweep of nature. A cast of 50 performers weaved thrilling circus arts, breathtaking theatrical effects and memorable songs into a meaningful seasonal story that resonates with the whole family.

Cirque du Soleil experienced many firsts with its new production. Wintuk had been designed exclusively for the Theater at Madison Square Garden-Cirque du Soleil's first permanent address in New York for a show presented outside the big top. Additionally, Wintuk was the first Cirque du Soleil show created specifically for a family audience.



The space wheel on Kooza. Soleil photo.

Although the show did business some of the reviews were not too favorable. Jocelyn Noveck for the Associated Press wrote on November 9. "A family holiday show from Cirque du Soleil. What could be more promising, with the weather getting colder and the kids itching for some indoor entertainment?"

"Alas, some of the 'cirque' is missing and some of the 'soleil,' too, from this new production at Madison Square Garden. Perhaps 'Wintuk' is just trying to do too many things. The show aims to tell a story that appeals to kids, as well as offer the same visual thrills that Cirque du

Soleil has long given their parents, and to do it all in the convenient Manhattan location of the Garden's WaMu Theater.

"The first problem is the space itself. The conventional stage setting doesn't allow the Cirque creative team to reach the heights, literally, of their more thrilling shows. Your heart sinks a bit when you realize, a few moments after the curtain has risen, that what you see, space-wise, is all you're gonna get. There are ramps, for roller-skating and stuff, but it's soon evident that the acrobats and trapeze artists will be seriously cramped.

"Of course, the talented performers are there, as you'd expect from Cirque du Soleil. There's the contortionist hidden within a giant rag doll, ballistic snowflake-like creatures dangling from ropes, cyclists, jugglers, clowns, a pretty cool balancing act, expert hula-hooping and some exciting acrobats using poles. One young man in particular has priceless comic facial expressions that are alone worth the price of admission.

"But all along, one wishes there was more, well, more Cirque du Soleil. And less, perhaps, of the attempts to tell what seems a rather thin story.

"Wintuk is the tale of Jamie, a young boy in jeans and a red down jacket who lives in a city bereft of snow. (The plot line seems eerily apt, given the recent balmy autumn and thoughts of global warming melting the Arctic ice cap.) The streets of the city are populated with an assortment of unusual characters, including giant shaggy dogs and friendly street lamps--with nice eyelashes--that seem to come alive.

"But what this boy wants is snow. So he sets out to find it, accompanied by a female shaman who's lost in the city, a shy man who seeks to discover his courage, and the shadow of a young girl. They are headed

to the land of Wintuk, where apparently the snow is hiding.

"There's probably lots more information to be had about this plot, but it rests in a \$15 program, which means many parents won't be able to explain to their little ones exactly what is going on.

"In any case, it's a nice enough story. But what little dialogue occupies the show—which is not much—is stilted, and it just makes you (and more importantly, your kids) a bit impatient for the real circus stuff.

"In the end, the snow does come, and this, the kids absolutely love. It envelops the entire theater in a happy swirl of paper flakes. This part of the show is quite literally unforgettable, because these flakes will end up fluttering out of little coat sleeves, little pant legs and maybe even your own pockets or purse for hours after you leave.

"But aside from a few of the acrobatic feats, those little flakes may be the most concrete memories you take away from Wintuk, a show that leaves you wanting more from those talented Cirque du Soleil folks."

The Cirque du Soleil Corteo unit, in its second year, played Dallas in February. During the stand an acrobat fell from the horizontal rigging.

Corteo played Columbus, Ohio, May 11 to June 10. The blue and yellow big top was flanked by six smaller tents. Sixty trailers were required to move the show. It was set up at the Ohio State fairgrounds. During the Columbus date Fred D. Pfening III met with the cast and discussed circus history.

On May 1 it was announced that a

Fred Pfening III talking to the Corteo cast.



1,600 seat theater was to be built in Dubai to house a Soleil show. This followed Soleil's Quidam unit playing Dubai in January 2007. On March 7 Soleil announced that after touring for 14 years under canvas Saltimbanco would be re-tooled to play arenas. On March 23 Soleil announced that another Las Vegas show would open at the Luxor Hotel in 2008.

On October 30 Guy Laliberte unveiled the One Drop Foundation in Montreal. Laliberte commented, "No one can remain indifferent when we know that at least every eight seconds, a child dies from a disease caused by drinking contaminated water." He would give 4 million Canadian dollars for 25 years to the foundation to fund projects to rebuild water wells and provide drinking water in poor countries.

An announcement was made on November 20 that an agreement had been made for Soleil to produce a permanent circus at Hollywood's Kodak Theater. Soleil committed to a ten year deal. Laliberte said the high-ceiling structure was ideal for Citque's acrobats

The 2007 Big Apple Circus program was titled Step Right Up. The show was written by Michael Christensen and Steve Smith and directed by Smith. Guillaume Dufresnoy was general manager. Rob Slowil was band director. The performance was again power-packed with talent.

The program of displays was: Welcome by Paul Binder; Svetlana and Gennadiy, beach game juggling; Big Francesco; Johnny Peers, Muttville Comix; Irina and Andreey Perfilyev, double traps; Grandma;

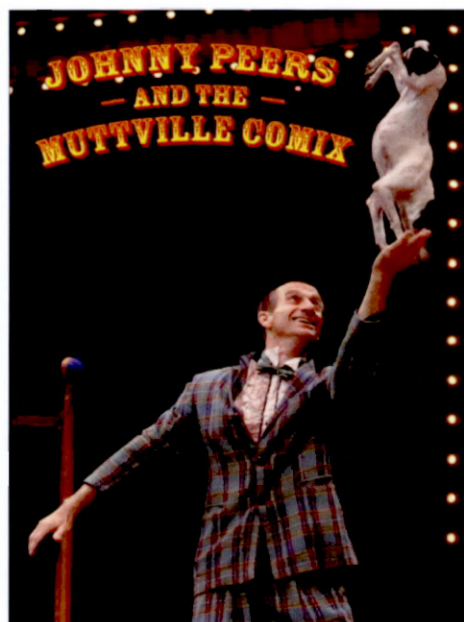
Justin Case, unicycles; the Zhengzhou Troupe, swinging poles; Yasmine Smart, liberty horses; Grandma and Joel Jeske; and the Liazeed Trio, hand balancing and brave new wheels.

The tented season opened in Atlanta, February 8-23. It then played Bridgewater, New Jersey; Boston;

Queens; Long Island; West Nyack, New York; Charlestown, Rhode Island and Hanover, New Hampshire.

The white summer big top was pulled out of storage for use in Boston. The location there was in the downtown.

The show was hit by a snow storm on March 7 in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Following the season close the show made a 250 run to winter quarters in Walden, New York. After the close the Zhengzhou Troupe returned to China, Francesco returned to France, the Liazeed Trio returned to Germany and Justin Case returned to Australia.

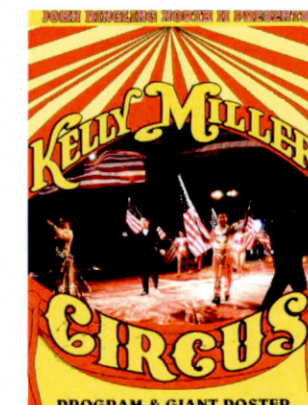
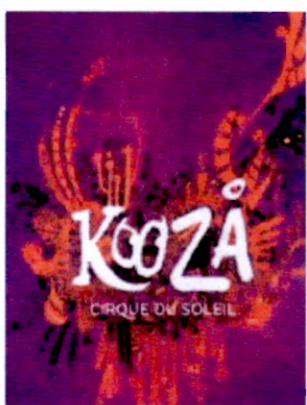
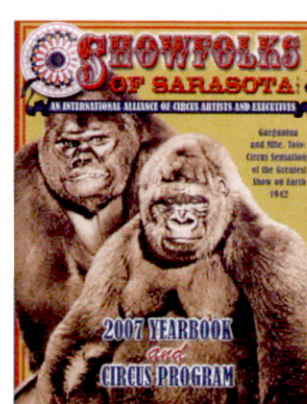
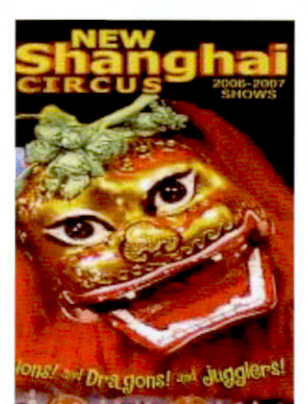
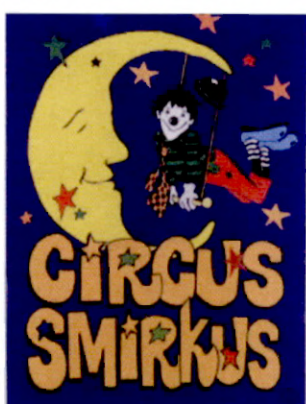
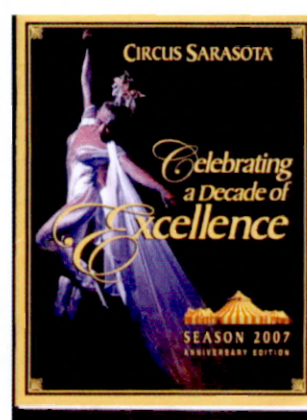
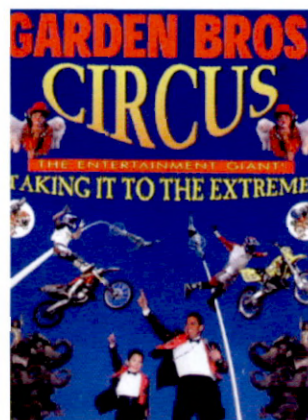
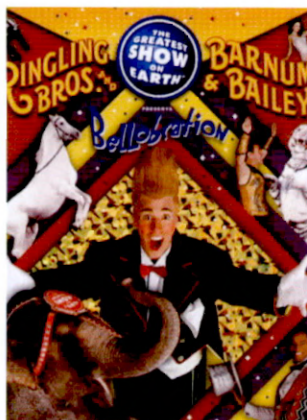


Johnny Peers on Big Apple. Big Apple photo.

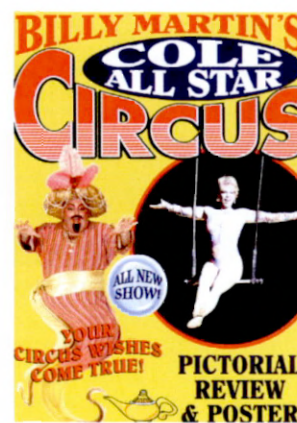
On December 20 Barry "Grandma" Lubin was presented the Lou Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award.

Like Ringling-Barnum Gold, UniverSoul, Cirque du Soleil, and Big Apple employed independent contract drivers to move the show from city to city. However the distance between Cunningham Park in Queens and the C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University in Brookville was only fourteen miles, and show drivers "gillied" the semis using three show-owned tractors.

Cedric Walker's UniverSoul Circus opened its fourteenth season in Savannah, Georgia on February 6.



2007 PROGRAMS





The Wuhan Chinese Flying act on UniverSoul. UniverSoul photo.

The production was titled *The Magic of Soul*. Tony Tone returned as ringmaster. The new show included Don Willis and Heidy De La Rosa, transformation act; Jose Torres and Henry Gonzales, space wheel; the Porcelain Dolls, bicycle number; the Wu Han Flyers; Ricardo, hand balancing and contortion; Willy Family, high wire and Louie del Moral with three Carson & Barnes elephants.



Apollo Circus window card.

A spin-off from UniverSoul was the Apollo Circus of Soul that appeared at the Apollo Theater in New York City. Former UniverSoul

ringmaster Casual Cal Dupree was joined by Tuffy Nicholas in producing the show. It opened on November 23 and ran for five weeks. The title of the show was later changed to Apollo Big Show Circus.

The acts were Asia Espana, cloud swing and silks; 75 year old Vivian Smallwood, the Rappin' Granny; Tom Greene, trampoline; Ganchimeg Oyon, contortionist; the Ayak brothers, double traps; the Sisters of Soul, dancers; and Kenichi Ebina, Apollo two-time dance champion. The show closed on Christmas Eve.

Circus Flora played its hometown stand in St. Louis, June 7-24. The show was titled *Marrakesh*. The performance included the Flying Pages; Sasha Alexandre Nevidonski, dressage; Andrew Adams and Ekika Gilfether, acrobats; the Wallenda high wire act; the St. Louis Arches and clown Nino Zoppe. Flora played Nantucket, Massachusetts, July 27-29.

Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis presented for the tenth year Circus Sarasota, February 1-25. The production was titled *Celebrating a Decade of Excellence*. The new location was next to the Ed Smith baseball stadium. Tarzan Zerbini's big top was used.

Cliff Roles was ringmaster. Greg and Karen DeSanto were featured clowns. The performance included the Flying Pages; Ekika Zerbini with six liberty horses; Raefael DeCarlo, juggler; the James Trio, teeterboard act; Yeromenko, horizontal bar act; Irina Markova, poodles; Anait Seyranyan, hand balancing; Igor and Svetlana Sudaechikov, quick change act and Dolly Jacobs, strap act.

Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis were married on October 26 in the courtyard of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

The October 12 Niagara Falls, *Ontario Review* told of the demise of Cirque Niagara, "An underwhelming tourist season and expiring visas have forced Cirque Niagara to shut its season down two weeks early. After gaining a foothold in the Niagara market last year, the made in Russia circus endured a slow summer, performing fewer shows before smaller crowds. The show's \$1.3 million tent will be dismantled after Sunday's show. The season was scheduled to run until October 6.

"We've got a lot of overhead, and revenues were not what we expected this year," said Jana Ray, Cirque's director of sales and marketing. "We still did quite well. But at the same time it wasn't our expectation."

"Adding to the dilemma was a handful of Russian performers whose temporary Canadian visas had expired. Ray said the paperwork was not completed in time to prolong their stay. Without the performers—including high-flying acrobats and Cossack riders—the show can't continue.

"Rave reviews weren't enough to keep the show's incredibly spectacular show Avaia and its Hamilton investors afloat," said the Hamilton



Circus Sarasota in Tarzan Zerbini's big top. Fred Pfening photo.

Spectator. Cirque Niagara lost \$5.7 million, most of it owed to investors, the majority from Hamilton."

Cirque X Inc., Cirque Niagara's parent company, filed for bankruptcy protection, listing liabilities of \$6.7 million and assets of \$490,000. The production listed 144 creditors ranging from founder Gabe Macaluso, who was owed \$192,136 in back payments and Canadian singer Michael

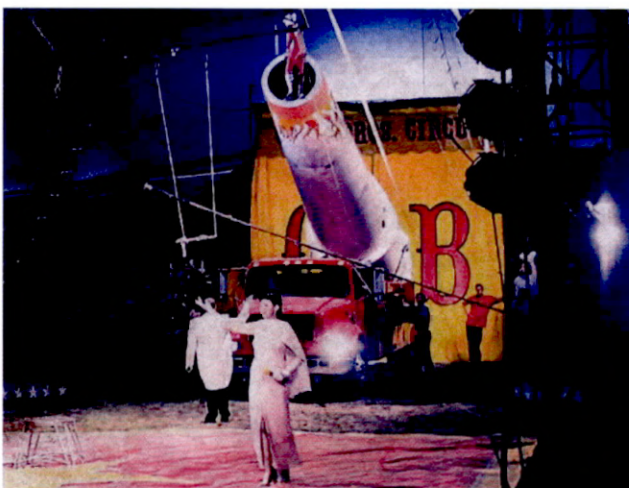
Burgess, who filed a \$150,000 claim against the company.

Cirque X inc. had invested \$10 million in building the tent and staging the show, which brought Russian-trained equestrian riders, acrobats, actors, musicians and circus performers together in a two-hour long performance that was akin to Cirque du Soleil or Cavalia-type shows.

John Pugh's New Cole Bros. Circus opened in DeLand, Florida, March 24-25. Chris Conners returned as ringmaster. The performance included Rafael Miranda, Andrey Medeiros and Luis Sallo, motorcycle globe; Chinese swing poles; the Kim Family, horseback juggling; Andrey Medeiros, comedy trampoline; the Ponce Family, flying act; the Rafael Abuhadba family, silks, strap trap acts and dogs; Chinese bungee act; Chinese hoop diving and Zarina Sinovat, cannon act.

The circus played Middle Island, New York, July 27-29 and Coney Island in Brooklyn, July 30 to August 5. The show was set up at Stillwell Avenue and Bowery next to Astroland. In an e-mail on August 17

Cole window card advertising the Coney Island stand.



The cannon act on Cole Bros. Circus. John Wells photo.

to Kinetic Carnival, The Coney Island Blog, Renee Story, Vice President-Administration of Cole Bros. Circus, explained that despite some problems with parking most patrons arrived to see the circus by public transportation and therefore the circus's run at Coney Island was a success.

"Cole Bros. Circus enjoyed a successful engagement in Coney Island, and looks forward to returning next year. In addition to its schedule of advertised shows, Cole Bros. Circus presented sold-out morning and early afternoon performances for children who attend religious camps. Attendance grew each day of the Cole Bros. Circus week-long stay, culminating in packed houses Thursday through Sunday, especially at its 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. shows. A majority of circus patrons used public transportation to visit the circus, evidenced by the waves of customers who lined up at the circus ticket office shortly after their trains arrived at the conveniently located Stillwell Ave. station. A few customers who attended the 8:00 p.m.

show on Friday said they had difficulty finding a place to park, likely due to the huge crowds who arrive on Coney Island early in anticipation of the Friday night fireworks.

"The circus is grateful to Deno's for delaying the start of the fireworks, so that our patrons would have opportunity to exit the Big Top in time to view the wonderful display that really rocks the beach. Our circus families, especially the children, loved the fireworks, the amusements, the shore and the ocean, which

was not only warm, but crystal clear. Staying at Coney Island was a treat for everyone on our show. The only complaint heard among our staff was with respect to weight gain. Living in proximity to numerous, great restaurants for a week, we indulged.

"Manning the 1-800 circus info line, circus staff in Florida was surprised by the number of callers who asked for directions to the circus location in Coney Island. Our customer service representatives explained that the circus was located on Stillwell Avenue, between West 12th Street and Bowery, opposite Nathan's. Numerous callers asked, 'Where's Nathan's?' That surprised us, and made us think that, perhaps the circus attracted people who might not have visited Coney Island in the past.

"Our experience assures us that Coney Island is a wonderful place. Judging by our crowds later in the week and the throngs of parents and kids on the boardwalk each evening, we learned that people seeking fami-

Carson & Barnes Circus opening day in Paris, Texas, March 24. Harry L. Kingston photo.



he does a fine job setting an original number during the opening parade, but his labored efforts throughout the program only reinforce the



A highly decorated Vargas semi. Jerry Cash photo.

impression of a skimpy enterprise being padded for time.

"More momentary highlights: Marinelli's trampoline workouts are exhilarating. So are the Yeromenkos, from the Ukraine whirling around a trio of horizontal bars. Vargas gives the Euro-centric clowns (including a funny band) plenty of time to please, and their antics seem to keep the moppets giggling. How good? I found myself giggling too--now and then--at some fairly amusing stuff a bit musty and tired at the edges. One of the comedy turns is a mock bull-fighter, Mendoza, working with a dog standing in for the bull. This serves also as a set up for another intermission photo op. Performers wear multiple hats. The Argentine clown Pocho, a come-in charmer with illusion, turns into a balloon salesman at interval time.

"The real ring stealers, though, are a prima cat and dog courtesy of another of those Russians, this one Vladimir, who have a miraculous way with getting furry pets to carry on like eccentric humans. The cat is a wonder, evidently in control of its own tail for posturing purposes, and able to roll about this way and that on cue. The dog waves his front paws for an extended period of time to the music. A pair of incredible delights. Loved 'em! Let's see, world, are the animals going out of their way these days to tell us, 'Let us back in, American circus, for we can save the show!'

"Other pace-retarding elements: hula hoops that do not impress and

sluggish prop changes between acts. Nor does a taped soundtrack consist inmostly of intense disco-styled drone distinguish the program much. Only two acts, Jonathan's cube juggling and the terrifically impressive Yeromenkos work against the hum-drum musical grain with music that feels contemporary yet not of the outside world.

"Missing in action:

Not just any wild animal acts or horses, but nothing in the air. (The Osmani Sisters, who work silk webs, did not appear. Neither did Roman Ring artist Yasmin or Juan's circus ballet.) Are we merely at the end of a losing season marked by early exits? I'd hate to think so. How odd that a circus owned by flyers should offer nothing over sawdust. Ah, but you ask, how about the champion Tabares? They open the second half, commanding a ringmaster's just bombast, 'Winners of the Gold Clown at the Monte Carlo Circus Festival in 2004!'

"This, I knew, was a moment worth traveling hundreds of miles to see. I sat right under the end net and what a thrill to watch them swooping through the air while they worked routine warm-up stuff and inserted flash and flair. I think I saw a single somersault, unlikely a double. And now--can you believe this--they are heading for the net! I was left utterly dumbfounded. Never have I seen so pitifully little accomplished on the flying return, and this from Monte Carlo Gold? When I cornered McRae on my way out, he told me "they definitely cut some stuff this morning." This morning? Pardon me, the show began at 2 p.m. Heck, they cut the

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"Want to see the Tabares in top flight form? Watch a video of them impress the Monte Carlo judges on the Vargas website, or call ahead to see if they might be in the mood to try impressing you.

"The new Circus Vargas is in many ways like the old (or in limbo) Circus Chimera. Maybe, at most, a quarter of the seats were fitted. No program magazine or sheet for sale, and several acts a no-show. Unlike Chimera, not a trace of advertising. A couple sitting behind me with their daughter said that had they not noticed the tent in the Fox Hills Mall parking lot, they would not have known there was a circus in their town. And unlike Chimera, Vargas gives one a magnificent big top setting to remember. Sadly, under it during a heavily padded couple of meandering hours, simply too little happened. Overall grade 2 stars."

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Inside the Chimera big top. Chimera photo.



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10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM
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A large number of circuses continued to make use of children's discount tickets in 2007. However during the year there were occasions when local officials questioned the fact that adult tickets were required.

pace alive with speed and gusto. Two acts in a row--could it be, are we about to see a program totally unencumbered by concession pitches, overhead video distractions, or inanely half baked story lines that go

nowhere?

"No, it can't. What follows are nagging slowdowns when ringmaster Ted McRae pitches intermission photo ops or the clowns wear out a welcome mat. Filler. One centers

around McRae's live Python snake, introduced out of a black sack along the aisle.

"Other commercials push flashlights and more photo ops. Then there is the hyperactive approach taken by McRae, who takes old time oratory over the top. A good singer,

he does a fine job setting an original number during the opening parade, but his labored efforts throughout the program only reinforce the



A highly decorated Vargas semi. Jerry Cash photo.

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Inside the Chimera big top. Chimera photo.



The show was titled Happy Days. Roy Ordaz was ringmaster. The performance included five dancers from Mexico; Raul and Gabriela Cubillos, juggling, chaiffon and contortionists; five Chinese Acro Stars did hoop diving, aerial bungee and juggle hats; Tiny Tim, miniature horse; Lira, upside-down walk; and Gino and Andrea Treblinka, roller skating act and globe of death. Clowns Ben Allen and Travis Beem left the show in May. The clown numbers were then performed by Fridman Torales who was on the show doing an up-side-down walk and Saul Alvarado. Chimra closed abruptly on July 2.

In December Judkins notified American circuses of a looming crisis if the United States Congress did not renew the Return Worker Exemption Act that allowed the number of legal non-immigrant visas for seasonal employees. He estimated that 80% of circus and carnival companies in America are dependent upon H2B workers for their very survival. The act was not renewed before Congress went home for Christmas vacation.

Judkins stated he was forced to cancel the 2008 season of Circus Chimera. He could not get the workers necessary to move his show.

The Brownsville, Texas *Herald* published an article on December 28 about Judkins's dilemma, saying in part:

"In Jim Judkins' Rio Hondo backyard, trailers of circus equipment sit locked and immobile, monkeys curl their fingers around the bars of a metal cage, a massive tent--the big top itself--is furled and stored behind a row of unused generators.

"Circus Chimera--Coming soon,' reads a spray painted sign on a trailer's broadside. Judkins laughs. No circus, he says, is coming to Brownsville in the near future. Due to recent changes in the United States' temporary-work visa program, Judkins had to cancel Circus Chimera's Itinerary for the first time in its 10-year history.

"Like most circuses, Circus Chimera is dependent on seasonal workers from outside the U.S. All 61 of the company's non-performing members, whose jobs range from setting up benches to selling tickets,

are from Mexico. When the provision for returning workers with previous H-2B visas expired in September, Judkins was not able to secure a temporary work visa for a single worker. These jobs, he says, could not be filled by an American workforce, leaving the circus with no choice but to cease operation.

"Since 1990, the H-2B visa program has granted a maximum of 66,000 visas annually to seasonal laborers from countries outside of the U.S. Demand for these visas steadily increased since the program's conception. When the cap was reached for the first time in 2004, leaving many employers in crisis, legislators acted quickly to create another avenue for temporary workers.



The Chimera cast. Chimera photo.

"In 2005, Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) and Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-Md.) introduced the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2006. The act exempted temporary seasonal workers who had participated in the H2B visa program during one of the previous three fiscal years and abided by all its rules--including returning to their country of origin--from counting towards the cap. But on Sept. 30, 2007, the act expired, leaving a shortage of visas for South Texas entertainment, scrimping and tourism industries.

"Judkins, who in addition to his duties at Circus Chimera handles temporary work visas for more than 30 carnivals and circuses across the country, helped submit applications

for 3,000 H-2B visas in 2007. Not a single one was granted, devastating not only Circus Chimera, but operations as large as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, which attracts nearly 2 million visitors per year.

"The (Houston show) will probably go on this year, but it will be significantly slimmer than it has been in previous years,' said John Meredith, of Meredith Advocacy Group, who works with the amusement industry in Washington D.C.

"Brownsville's annual February circus, which has attracted approximately 15,000 visitors for the last 10 years according to Circus Chimera, has already been cancelled. 'Those of us who have been working with the program for almost 20 years, making

sure that everything is legal--we are going to be badly hurt,' said Judkins.

"According to Judkins and Meredith, the circus industry's most significant disadvantage is its schedule. Employers may only begin applying for H-2B visas 120 days before work will begin. Because circuses and carnivals tour late in the visa-granting season, the businesses get a late start in applying for temporary work visas. The 66,000 available visas had already been depleted by October, when circuses were first able to begin the application process for the 2008 season.

"In late October, Judkins began making phone calls to his employees to inform them of the bad news. Without a 2008 tour, he was forced to tell his Mexican and American employees that their jobs had been

lost.

"He called the company's office in Oklahoma and fired seven full-time employees. He called homes in Veracruz, Mexico and explained to more than 60 men and women that they should begin looking for new jobs. 'It was hard to do,' Judkins said. 'These people had done everything right. They work hard and they go home.'

"Judkins' workers make a \$100 deposit at the beginning of the season, and got the money back only after they've returned to their home country. Of the 3,000 workers he helps bring over every year, he estimates that 30 'disappear' after the season ends.

"I've never thought about staying after my visa expires," said Isauro Collo Apodaca, who has worked in the circus industry on temporary visas since 1991. 'I work in the U.S. to earn money for my family, and I return to Veracruz deliver it.'

"Last year, Apodaco earned \$660 per week with Circus Chimera, most of which he sent back to his mother and children in Mexico. This year, because he was unable to secure a visa, he is working part time for a construction company in Veracruz, earning \$230 per week. 'My family was dependent on that income,' he said. 'Now we are hurting.'

"Judkins, who studied classics and political science at Haverford College before taking a full-time position at a Pennsylvania circus in 1978, has devoted much of his past year to defending his industry's position in the H-2B visa debate. He has flown back and forth between Brownsville and Washington D.C., where he has made several allies in Congress, including Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz.

"Industries in South Texas are deeply affected by the ongoing issue of the expiration of the H-2B visas, particularly those who work in shrimping, entertainment, and tourism, all staples of the South Texas economy,' Ortiz wrote in a prepared statement. 'That is why I have co-sponsored legislation (with Rep. Bart Stupak of Michigan) that would exempt returning guest workers on H-2B visas from being counted against the overall H-2E cap.

"But until such legislation is

passed, John Meredith worries that employers will have an incentive to use illegal labor. 'if employers can't secure visas through a legal route,' he said, 'then they'll have to hire undocumented workers if they want to stay in business.'

"Although Jim Judkins has become, as he calls himself, 'the de-facto lightning rod for the H-2B issue,' he is looking forward to resuming a less political livelihood. 'I miss watching the show,' he said. 'I miss listening to people clap and bringing happiness to the cities we visit.'

Ian Garden, Jr.'s Garden Bros. Circus 2007 production was titled Taking It to the Extreme. Ian and his son Chase were ringmasters.

It played Niagara Falls, Ontario, June 15-17. The performance included the Winns, aerial motorcycle; Andre Markov, juggler; Fan Zhang, slack wire; Raul Costanzo, dog and picnic routine; Delilah Zerbin and Mike Donoho, unridable mule; Winns, Wheel of Destiny and sway poles; Markov's dog act; Billy Morris with Carson & Barnes elephants and a motorcycle trick riding act closing the show.

Garden came south of the border for dates in Lowell and Springfield, Massachusetts, and Cleveland, Toledo and Dayton, Ohio among others. The show was scheduled to play Youngstown, Ohio, but was cancelled due to an agreement prohibiting any other show playing the building within 60 days of a touring Sesame Street show.

Johnny Walker's Walker Bros. Circus played indoor dates during the winter and spring. The under canvas dates began in June. It was the second season for the new big top. The acts included Johnny Walker III with an exotic animal act, trained by Lance Ramos, consisting of camels, llamas, zebras and ponies. The rest of the performance was by the McInyre family, Francine, sin-



The large Zoppe Circus big top.

gle-trap; Yoya, lyre; McInyre Duo, high wire; and Sasha, dressage.

Giovanni Zoppe's Zoppe Family Circus played the Festa Italiana in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 21-24 and the Erie County Fair in Hamburg, New York, August 10-21. The acts were clown Nino (Giovanni); Rudolph Heinen, dogs; Tosca Zoppe, single pony; Erika and Andrew Adams, strap act and Nino and Tosca, riding act.

Trey Key's Culpepper & Merriweather Circus played Kenyon, Minnesota on July 8. The midway included a pony ride, a moon bounce, a pit show and a concession-ticket semi. The well worn single ring big top contained a seat trailer and blues. James B. Hebert, Jr. was announcer. The performance included Casey McCoy with four tigers; clown Brent DeWitt; trick bicycle; Simone Sykes, Spanish web and single trap; Karina Perez, hula hoops; the Dykes family, unicycles; Paula Dykes, birds; the Perez Trio, high wire; April Dykes, rola bola; and the Perez family, Russian swing and high wire. Doug Terranova's elephants had been with the show, but left to appear at the Circus World Museum.

Bob Childress opened the spring tour of his Lewis & Clark Circus on

Lewis & Clark set up in York, South Carolina. York Enquirer-Herald photo.



March 27. Eighty-year-old King Charles Weathersby was back as 24 hour man. The big top was 90 by 60 feet in size. There was a petting zoo on the midway.

The performance included Captain Dell Toro, three tigers; Martin Duo, spinning cubes; Farmer Brown, goats; Ayala Family, perch act; Bill Brickley's dogs; Jose Ayala, rola bola; clown Joey; Maria Ayala, big and little horses; Elizabeth, hula hoops; Mira Ayala, camel act; Amando Ayala, juggler and Elizabeth Ayala, llyra and trap.

The show was set up in York, South Carolina on March 29 and hundreds of people were waiting in line to buy tickets when a dispute arose with city officials. The show was packed up and left York with circus fans disappointed. The fall tour opened on September 5 in Clayton, Georgia. It played Atmore, Alabama in October.



The Alain Zerbini Circus in Fairlawn, New Jersey in September. Paul Gutheil photo.

Alain Zerbini's Zerbini Family Circus opened the season with three units in Melbourne, Coco Beach and Titusville, Florida on April 1. In Titusville the show was presented in a yellow and blue European big top. Melody Ramirez was ringmaster. The acts included the Julian Troupe, trampoline; Alain Zerbini, dog act and camels; Herman and Calinca Rodogell, rag doll act; Damien Gallartta, unicycle; Ozzie Sanchez, juggling; Herman Rodogell, ladder balancing; Calinca Rodogell, aerial silks and Gustavo Ramirez, space wheel.

Gopher Davenport's L. E. Barnes & Bailey Bros. Circus played an indoor date at Natchitoches, Mississippi, January 17. The local paper head-

lined an article "Welcome to The Greatest Show on Earth." The most interesting reference quoted John "P. T." Davenport, ringmaster, "Describing the show as the most spectacular show you will ever have in this building." It said the show had camels, snakes, horses, ponies, tigers and elephants.

An indoor date in Maplewood, Minnesota on April 30 used three rings. The performance included hula hoops; rola bola; Tim Davidson with Boo the elephant; foot juggling; Spanish web; silks; Miss Butista, contortion; six liberty horses; a boxing kangaroo; aerial hoop; Victor, head balancing trapeze; Martinez family, trampoline; Mongolian Angels, contortion; and motorcycle globe.

Using the Barnes & Bailey title the show played a three day stand in Grayslake, Illinois early in May. The *Grayslake News Sun* published an

article about the show on May 5. The piece told of Quennie the elephant and camels Chewie and Chewbacca. Quoting merchandising manager Charles

Dawes, it said the big top was 32-feet tall and 240-feet long. Two photos were included, one of Queenie and one showing the motorcycle globe inside the red and yellow big top.

A clash with animal rights people in Longmont, Colorado prompted deputies to arrest circus manager Phil Dolci. He was quickly released.

The Watertown, Wisconsin *Daily Times* reported on May 26 that L. E. Barnes & Bailey Bros. was to be set up near Watertown's airport in the town of Emmet. However, the show failed to get a permit in time. "We have to pay \$400 for permit fees in addition to the rent we paid for the land," according to circus business manager Philip Dolci. He later said the show was set up on N901 state highway. The feature of the show in Watertown was Quennie the elephant.

The show also found a problem when it started to set up at the

Shelby County Fairgrounds in Harlan, Iowa on September 21. There had been a miscommunication as races had been scheduled that day. Another lot was quickly located. The *Harlan Tribune* commented on some confusion about the cost of the show saying, "Tickets distributed across Harlan had the words 'Admit One Adult or One Child Free' in big letters, but in smaller print underneath continued saying 'With the purchase of One Adult Ticket or One Child Ticket.'" Circus officials confirmed that ticket prices for the show were \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. The distributed rickets could be used as outlined, so basically the tickets create a "2 for 1" admittance.

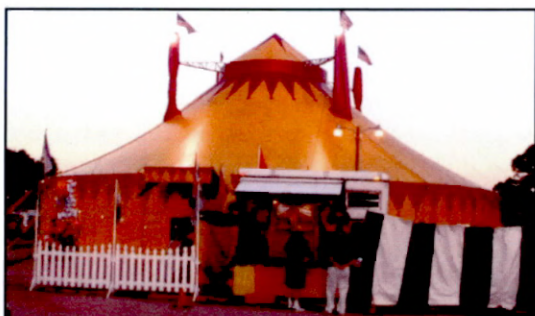
It played Sheperdsville, Kentucky in September. Jim Silverlake was superintendent. With the elephants away the liberty horses were the big animal act. Some posters were used but did not have a show name, only the date and location.



Leibling Bros. Circus. Gary Hill photo.

Chewy Davenport and Tommi Leible's Leibling Bros. Circus played Canton, Texas on January 26. Brian LaPalme was ringmaster. David Connors did unicycle and plate spinning acts. It played Paris, Texas on January 28. By June 12 the show was in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Tommi Leible was on vacation in Europe. Caroline and Mike Rice presented their dogs, ponies, horses and camels. Other acts were rola bola, aerial cradle, gaucho, juggling and Leible's elephant. The show played Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota on July 21. The Boyceville, Minnesota *Dunn County News* published an article on July 23 about Leibling playing there on July 31. The article told about Mike Rice and his family's animal presentations.

The Amazing Anastasini Circus played Englewood, Florida on



The Amazing Anastasini Circus big top. Jim Cole photo.

January 18. The performance included the Espanas, Russian swing; Miss Asia, aerial chiffon; Nonno Anastasini, comedy car; juggling; a dog act; Miss Irene, cloud swing; Miss Chiata, hula hoops and chair balancing. The show closed the first week of December at the Brandon Town Center Mall east of Tampa, Florida.



The Clyde Beatty Circus in Ocala, Florida in February. Barbara Moore photo.

Ned Toth leased the Clyde Beatty title and played some indoor dates late in 2006. He leased a big top and played an outdoor date in Ocala, Florida, February 2-4. Frank Murray's two elephants were on the show as well as a boxing kangaroo act. The show moved to Mt. Dora, Florida, February 9-11 where it closed.

Toth also played some dates in conjunction with Alain Zerbini and made a final try in Sarasota's Roberts Arena. The Clyde Beatty Circus was suppose to played Harglen, Texas, December 28, and then the Texas Valley. But it was reported the show could not get permits. This was another try by Toth that failed.

Struppi Hanneford continued in

2007 as a major producer of indoor and tented circuses. The company used three big tops and produced as many as three indoor units at the same time.

The Royal Hanneford Circus opened the season at Dade County Fair in Miami, March 14 to April 1. On March 22-25, three units played Oklahoma City, Columbus, and Dayton, Ohio. The performance in Dayton included Heidi Herriott, ringmaster; Leo Garcia, space wheel; Jimmy Hall's bears; the Bertinis, aerial cradle; Vlastics, comedy trampoline; Fusco family, gaucho act; Yexie, contortion and Joe Frisco with three Carson & Barnes elephants.

A Hanneford unit played the Adventureland Amusement Park in Des Moines, Iowa, opening on Memorial Day. Billy Martin was ringmaster. The performance included Angela Martin, single trap; Carlos Svenson, dressage horse; Leo Garcia, space wheel; Smirnovs, quick change act and the Garcia motorcycle globe.

Royal Hanneford played the Sunshine Fair in Cobleskill, New York, August 7-12. The forty-five minute show was presented in one of the smaller Hanneford big tops. The Fusco Family of seven opened the performance with a gaucho act. Additional acts were Adreanna, aerial lyre; Allesia, hula hoops; Fuscovs, juggling; the Mongolian archers and three elephants from Carson & Barnes.

Hanneford produced the Big E Circus, September 14-30 in a Cannobio big top. Heidi Herriott was ringmaster. The acts were Alsya Goulevich, hula hoops; Johnny Peers, dogs; the Cibolari, tetterboard act; the Flying Pages; Miss Gagik, hand balancing and Fusco brothers, juggling.

Tarzan Zerbini opened the season playing the Ft.

Wayne, Indiana Shrine, January 25-28. The 2007 performance included Stefany's poodles; Igor and Tatiana, juggling; Miss Guillarmina, single traps; Erike Zerbini, dancing horse; clown Piolita; Yury and Nikita, hand balancing; Pepe, balancing acrobat; Anthony and Jennifer Thomas, elephants; Igor and George, rola bola; Svetlana, straps and hand balancing; Poema Family, risley and Aristovs, rag doll act.

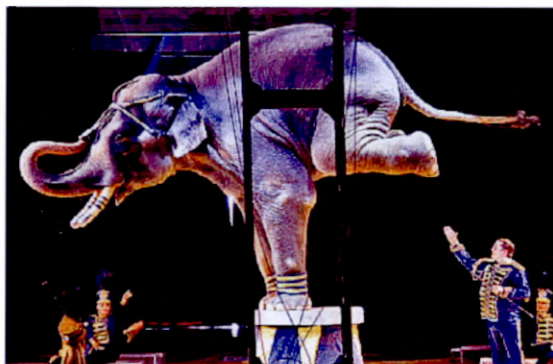
On the last day of the Zerbini produced Marietta, Georgia, Shrine Jimmy Garcia fell 30-feet from a high wire. The Zerbini under canvas tour again included the Western Canadian Shrine dates.

James Hamid's Circus Royal played the Springfield, Massachusetts Shrine, April 26-29. The performance included Adam Burke with the Hawthorne tigers; the Anastasin family, diablos; clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto; Mercedes Pages, pony drill; Alvarez family, juggling; Davisio, plate spinning; the Flying Pages and Urias Troupe, motorcycle globe.

The show played the Utica, New York Shrine, October 5-7. Peter Sturgis was ringmaster and Larry Rothbard was band director. The program included clown Nino Zoppe; Adam Burke with the Hawthorne tigers; the three Daniels, magic and dogs; Mercedes, pony drill; Alvarez Family, juggling; Alecia Michelle and April Rose, cloud swings; Davisio, plate spinning; the Flying Pages; Alecia, Carina and Jenna, aerial lyras and Jorge and Louann Barreda's elephants.

George Carden's International Circus played the Waukesha,

Larry Carden and Bo.



Wisconsin Shrine, June 12. The program included the Hawthorn tigers and Agostine Maltese space wheel.

Les Kimes' Circus Royal played the St. Paul, Minnesota Shrine late in March. Devon Chandler was the singing ringmaster. The performance included Mike Winn, motorcycle on inclined wire; T. J. Howell and Arestov Duo, juggling; Tahar, alligators; clowns Greg and Karen DeSantos; Jennifer Vidbel, dressage horse and ponies; Gillermina Videla, Spanish web; David and Dania, quick change act; T. J. Howell, unicycles; Anthony Thomas, three elephants and the Winns, sway poles.



The Joe Bauer Circus Maximus big top.

Joe Bauer's Circus Maximus played the Mississippi State Fair under canvas, October 3-14. The acts included Tino Cristiani's trampoline act; Gina, juggler; Carlos Svenson's comedy horse; Irina and Andrey Perfiljev, double traps; and clown Larry Clark. Bauer had another unit at the Montgomery, Alabama fair using a big top leased from Walker Bros. Circus.

Bauer played the Fort Walton Beach, Florida Fair, November 2-11. The performance included Brian Franzen's elephants; Carlos Swenson's goats; Leo Garcia's globe and space wheel; Cristiani Family, trampoline; Gena Schwartzman, juggling and Timothy Tegge, ringmaster and clown.

Jody Jordan's World Circus played the Flint, Michigan Shrine early in January. Catherine Hanneford was ringmaster. The strong performance included Adam Burke's wild animal act; Visan and Jenny, aerial motorcycle; Chief Red Feather, dressage horse; Jose's pony drill; Princess Shalimar, birds; Isavetta duo, double traps; Kamborov Russian riders; Elena and Jeremy, double chifbons;

the Valencia Gouchos; Yessia, contortion act; Jeremy and Renato, juggling; the Flying Ponce family; Russian swing and Bret Carden with three elephants.

Jordan played one day in Marion, Ohio, between Shrine dates in Cincinnati, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Bruno Blaszk's tigers; Yessica and Claudia Alvarado, double traps; the Espanas, motorcycle globe and Russian swing; the Kyrgyzstan Russian riders and the Carden elephants were among the talent.

The show played the Las Vegas Shrine, January 22-23. Ari Steeples was ringmaster. The acts included

Ashley Winn's slide for life; Vincent Von Duke's six cats; Masha Anita, silks; Garcia Duo, cradle act; Winn family aerial motorcycle and motorcycle on incline wire; Iniakina's, quick change act; Steeple's bears; Dieter Gulambos, chair balancing; Karoly Zeman, BMX bike act; the Flying Cortez; Hans Klose, dogs and sword balancing; Alexander Cortez and Dieter Gulambos, juggling and Raymond Esqueda with three elephants.

Jordan played the Sacramento, California Shrine, April 19-22, under a big top. Wild animals and elephants were returned to the performance after being excluded for the prior two years. Jordan's Las Vegas Circus played Lexington, Kentucky Shrine in the spring. It was presented in a new blue and white big top.

Cindy Migley's Circus Spectacular in Winnipeg under the Bauer big top. Tim Tegge photo.



Circus Gatti played the Los Angeles Shrine, April 12-15. Justin Loomis was the new ringmaster. The performance included Yaro Hoffman's wild animals; Elena and Christian, quick change act; clown Condorreto; Elena and the Mitris, silks; Monica Zerbini and Elena, hula hoops; the Apollos hand balancing; The Roaring 20s, production number; the Toscani high wire act and motorcycle globe; Genevieve Lemenu, liberty horses; Michelle Rivera and Monica Zerbini, single traps; John Pelton with three elephants and the Viorel Troupe, Russian pole act. Wild animal trainer Yaro Hoffman died while the Gatti show was in Medford, Oregon.

Serge Coronas, Sr. opened his Circus Hollywood at the Florida State Fair in Tampa on February 8 for a twelve day run. The show was presented under a Canobbio big top. Devin Chander was ringmaster. The single ring circus opened with Steve McNamara as Captain USA, human cannon ball. Other performers were Christa Coronas, hula hoops; Nicole Coronas, single traps; Miss Stevanna, Friesian horses; clown Pasquale; Carlos Sanchez, high wire and Serge Coronas, Jr. motorcycle globe. The winter tour closed in Bradenton, Florida, April 15.

The Nock Family Circus played Sarasota's Julie Rohr Academy in November. Tony Bartok was ringmaster. Others in the performance were clown Dusty Sadler; the Chinese Yong Dom troupe, lion dance, bungee and hat juggling; John Nock, chair piling; Aleta, hula hoops; Yong Ti Li, contortion; the Alizar troupe, hand balancing and Aurelia Wallenda, cloud swing;

Cindy Migley's Circus Spectacular played Hibbing, Minnesota, May 13, and the Edmonton, Alberta Shrine, March 15. The acts included Larry Carden with three elephants featuring Bo, a quick change act, unicycles, tigers and a double space wheel.

The show played a number of Shrine dates in Michigan, North Dakota, and Minnesota

before going into Canada for stands in Manitoba and Alberta. In Winnipeg was show used Joe Bauer's European big top.

During the season the elephants were Joe Frisco with Carson & Barnes group in the United States and Brett Carden's group in Canada. Other acts in the performance included clown Tim Tegge; Shane Johnson's cat act and comedy car; Joanne Wilson's poodle review; the Aretovs, quick change; the Flying Malteses; the Martin Espana troupe, Russian swing, motorcycle on wire and globe.



Billy Martin, ringmaster.

Billy Martin's Cole All Star Circus played its usual route in upper New York State. The performance was themed around a "Genie," played by John Kane. Kane interacted with some of the acts and presented a magic number. The show included a doll house illusion by Kane; Tony and Daria Gueorguiev spinning various frames; the Bertinis, unicycle act, trampoline and juggling; Kim Sue Valla, miniature doll; Craig Rogers, giant hoop and dog act; Los Ritnos, gaucho number; and Kim Sue and Angela Martin, single trap act.

Jorge Pages' Circus Pages opened on January 12 in Plant City, Florida. New to the show was sixteen year old Colleen Pages with three tigers. The act replaced her sister Vicenta, who was on Ringling-Barnum's Blue Unit. James Earhardt was ringmaster, juggler and dog act. The program included Rebecca Starr, aerial lyre, contortion and silks; Frieda Pages, two camel act; Colleen Pages, dressage rider, hula hoops; Jeane Ibarra,



Oscar Garcia's Star Family Circus.

plate spinning; Ibara family, trampoline and Jorge Pages elephants.

Oscar Garcia's Star Family Circus played the Clinton, Mississippi Armory on January 29. Cathy Garcia was announcer. Other acts were the Tony Ramirez Family, single trapeze, hula hoops and rola bola; the Portugal-Rosales Family, hand balancing, juggling and trampoline; Reyna Garcia, motorcycle globe; Garcia's dogs and clown Tony Ramirez. The show played the Vermont State Fair in Rutland in the fall.

Ray Valentine's Circus Valentine played a phone promotion date in New Braunfels, Texas, June 20. Tim and Barbara Tegge presented an illusion turn and foot juggling. The show played Corpus Christi in an arena, June 23.

Jose Cole, the little Barnum of the North country, opened his circus in a Minnesota blizzard in Sauk Rapids, which was no problem for this seasoned showman. Returning were ringmaster Brian LaPalme and magic and Tom Demry with his dogs, pony and elephant. Other acts were Pablo Rodriguez, chair stacking; clown Lorenzo; Miss Joy, hula hoops; Miss Cathy, foot juggling and Rodriguez Duo, aerial cradle. By April 9 the show was in Devils Lake, North Dakota. The twelve-week tour ended May 17.

Paul Kaye again produced a mammoth circus for the Evansville, Indiana Hadi Shrine Circus, November 22-25. Tommy Baker was ringmaster and Clem Toca was band director. A calliope concert preceded the show. The performance included opening spec America on Parade followed by a ten elephant long-mount;

Crystal, Rebecca, Wendy, Roman rings; Alecia, April and Jennifer, cloud swings; Gail and Linda, aerial loop; Alida, Christi, Karla, Kim Sue, Mara, Mary, Pauline and Sammi, lyres; fourteen Hawthorn white tigers, presented by Wade Burke; Clatt and

Belle and Vlastimil, aerial cradle; Jennifer's pets and Klose's dogs; the Apollo Duo, silks; Blaine, Hansel and Wimberly, foot juggling; Lancelot's camels, zebras, llamas and ponies; aerial ballet (18) featuring Gabrisla, single trap and one arm swings; Castle's bears; Eosaire-Zoppe chimps and Derick's bears; Jeffery's comedy car; Shane, Gabbie and Deiter, juggling; Spiderman; the Flying Michaels Family; ten Carson & Barnes elephants; Acosta brothers, high wire; the Kenya Wizards, acrobats; Juan's space wheel and Jordan's motorcycle globe.

This was a real old time three ring circus. The only thing missing was a large riding act like the Cristianis. There just are no longer such acts in America. As a patriotic gesture the Hadi Shrine admitted all service personnel in uniform and their family free of charge.

Tino and Mara Cristaini's Cristaini Follies du Cirque played North Port, Florida on February 24. The circus was presented in front of an attractive back-drop and entrance.

The performance included Dallas Zoppe, hula hoops; Mara Cristiani, single trap; Gena Cristaini, juggling; Zoppe's dogs and Pam Rosaire's chimps.

Cirque Shanghai played Chicago's Navy Pier in July. The acts included two women on a aerial ladder; five women contortion act; unicycles and Russian wheels.

The show played the New Victory Theater in New York. A very favorable review appeared in the December 11 *New York Times*. It noted the two hour show moved at a brisk pace, hopping from one talent to another that included human pyramids, balancing acts on wires and

two girls on roller-skates. A feature was Li Rong, contortionist and balancer, as well as Wang Xinyi getting in and out of a barrel.

Tuffy Nicholas' Great Moscow State Circus (Stars of the Moscow Circus) played Cleveland, Ohio on March 1. The performance included Nikoli and Sasha, hand balancing; Anastasia, silk act; clown Borsh on trampoline; strong man; illusions; Ghana, contortions; and Russian Cossack dancers.

Nicholas' Moscow International Circus played the South Mountain Fairgrounds near Biglerville, Pennsylvania, May 1. Nikolai Koshkarev was manager. The show included Guyliverd Agaverdiev, slack wire; Nikolai and Sasha, adagio; aerial contortions; clowns; hula hoops; strong man and knife throwing; an adagio act; trampoline; strap act and acrobats. The acts included the Perfilevs trapeze act and the Espana troupe's Russian swing.

The show made a Florida tour in the fall. It played Kissimmee on September 13. Barry Schmoyer reunited with Nicholas in operating the circus. Nicholas' Cirque Hawaii continued a second year in Honolulu.

Sasha Vosk's Moscow Circus played the Santa Cruz beach boardwalk, July 8 to August 15. The artists were Daria Bogdanova, contortionist; Serhey Toropov, hand balancer; Olga Legenda, hula hoops; Olga Legenda and Andriy, acrobatic adagio; Evgeny Vasilenko, slack wire; Tetyana Petrova, limbo dancing and clown Vladimir Tichonoc.

The Russian American Kids Circus played Purdue University's Loeb Playhouse November 18.

Australia's Circus Oz played the Pittsburgh's Byham Theater on October 10 and Berkeley, California, November 29 to December 2. The new show was titled Laughing at Gravity. Christa Hughes was ringmistress and the acts included Marr Wilson, the singing stuntman; Scott Hone, BMX bike act; Michael Ling, pole scaling act; Sosina Wogayehu, juggler and Mel Fyfe, strong woman.

Tim Tegge's Mystification played fifteen sponsored dates from Jamestown, North Dakota to San Antonio, Texas.

Circo Vasquez, traveling on twelve trucks, again made a cross country tour playing in Texas, Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Georgia, New York and North Dakota. New to the show was a lavender Cannobio big top seating 1,900 people. The entrance was through a 70 x 30 foot reception tent containing concession stands.



Circo Vasquez at Shea Stadium in New York City. Maxine House photo.

Vasquez again played the parking lot of Shea Stadium in Queens, New York in the fall. Advertising was on Spanish radio and television. All posters were in Spanish.

The performance included Virginia Tuells and Ihosvanys, contortion and hand balancing; the Poroto family of clowns; the Calusan troupe, teeterboard and Russian bar; Aldo Vasquez, mixed act with horses, camels and zebra; Alayn Alegria, single traps; Olate's dogs and the Galvis family flying act. The wild animal act could not work in New York.

Roberto Valenzuela, age 35, fell forty feet while performing a silk act on Circo Hermanos Vasquez in Montebello, California on April 30.

The 2007 edition of Circo Hermanos Caballero again featured the Caballero family. Alvina presented miniature liberty horses; Luis worked a liberty act; Natalia worked a single trap act and the flying act consisted of Natalia, Ruben, Jr., Luis and Alvina. Ruben Jr., was ringmaster.

Jamie Garcia's Garcia Bros. Circus played the Metro New York Balloon & Music Festival, August 10-12. The five shows each day featured a human cannon ball, a motorcycle globe, clowns, contortionists and magic.

The Circo Osorio/American Crown Circus opened its season with its annual Henderson (Las Vegas) date at the end of March. The show was set up at the St. Peters Church. The show was side walled. Robert Osorio was ringmaster. The hour and twenty minute performance included the Pitimini troupe, trampoline; Luigi, juggler; the Pintado troupe, teeterboard act; Stephanie, Roman rings; Sylvia, unicycle; India, balancing and contortion; and Bardo Garcia, space wheel.

On the weekend of March 17-18 American Crown, Cirque Atayde and Circo Vasquez

were all in Las Vegas.

The Circo Atayde performance included clown Kiwi; Garzas, statue act; Douglas and Oliver Ramos, space wheel; Richards brothers, juggling; Figueva family, dogs and the Flying Rodogels.

Esqueda Bros. Circus played indoors at the Craven County, North Carolina fairgrounds, June 2-3. Annilee Esqueda was ringmaster. The program included Jose Valencua, pony drill; Armando Christiani, comedy trampoline; Master Lee, snakes; Lilly Cristiani, single traps and sword balancing; clown Walter Lamberton; Eddie Steeples, chimp act and bears; Bonny Ortiz, juggling; Nathan Valencia, silks; and Alfonso Esqueda, dogs.

Luna Bros. Circus, under a big top, played Sours Lake Texas on November 12.

Luna Bros. Circus Europa played the Royalty Theater in Clearwater, Florida. The performance by mostly Russians included plate spinning; hula hoops; acrobatics; clowns and hand balancing and adagio.

Neil Goldberg's Cirque Branson played the Remington Theater in Branson, Missouri, from May to December. His junior Soleil Cirque Jungle Fantasy played dates in Louisiana, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and Michigan in January. The hour and a



Luna Bros. Circus. Harry L. Kingston photo.

half performance included a rope act; four contortionist; strap act; juggling; silks; German wheel; single traps; rola bola and hand balancing. His Cirque Dreams played Palm Springs, California from January to April.

The Delmonte Circus Extreme played Victoria, Texas on June 21.

Cirque Le Masque played Lorain, Ohio, October 1. The acts included swords, hand balancing, German wheel, globe juggling, chair stacking and strong man.

Circus Eloize played the University of California at Berkeley in January. The Montreal based eleven person cast presented a two-hour performance included Stephane Gentilini, hand balancing; Catherine Girard, aerial hoop; and Nadine Louis, contortionist. The show played San Diego, California, December 3-9 and Dallas, December 11-16.

The Walter and Victoria Murcia's Victoria's Circus played the Stark County Fair, Canton, Ohio, August 28 to September 3 and the York, Pennsylvania fair, September 7-16. The acts included high wire, motorcycle globe, inclined wire motorcycle. Roman rings, comedy trampoline and clown.

Bill Allen's Cirque Symphonie appeared symphony orchestras throughout the country. Ten to fifteen performers worked on stage. The acts included jugglers, acrobats, aerialists and a strongman.

Le Grande Cirque played the Palace Theater in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, November 1 to January 6, 2008.

Ed Russell's Russell Bros. Family Fun Circus again played the Costa Mesa, California fair early in June.

The Gibtown Benefit Circus was

presented on January 20. Charles Schlarbaum was band director and Ward Hall was ringmaster. The displays were Jennifer Walker, dogs and pony; Susan Vidbel,

single traps ponies and cloud swing; Jack Cook's comedy car; Miss Saha, dressage riding; Great Houston, comedy illusions; Lance Ramos, exotic animal act; Paulo, juggling; and Terry Frisco's two elephants.

Sarasota's PAL Sailor Circus was held March 21-28 in the vinyl ceiling arena next to the Sarasota high school. The show was titled Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Circus Factory. The performance included Spanish webs, Roman rings, rola bola, cradle acts, tumbling, high wire, teeterboard, silks, unicycles, rolling globes and a flying act.

Eight members of the show appeared in the Houston, Texas HEB Holiday Parade on Thanksgiving Day. A return engagement was presented in Sarasota, December 27-29.

Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival was held July 14-21. A parade was staged on July 21 with Pedro Carrillo as parade marshal. The giant Peru Amateur Circus was given daily during the week in the circus building. Over 200 students were in the show. The acts included an all-girl seven high pyramid on the high wire;

Roman ladders; a flying trapeze act; double traps; Russian swing; and rolling globes.

Bearded lady and sword swallower Jennifer Miller's Circus Amok with her band of merry performers played various New York City parks. Her web site stated the show was a New York City based circus-theater company whose mission was to provide free public art addressing contemporary issues of social justice to the people of New York. Since 1989 it brought its funny, caustic and sexy, political one-ring spectacles to diverse neighborhoods. The company is composed of seven ring-performers, a six member live band, three roustabouts and a trucker-technician.

This year's show titled Bee-Dazzled had a busy September playing Riverside Park, Washington Square, Coney Island, Union Square, Columbus Park, St. Mary's Park Prospect Park and Fort Green Park.

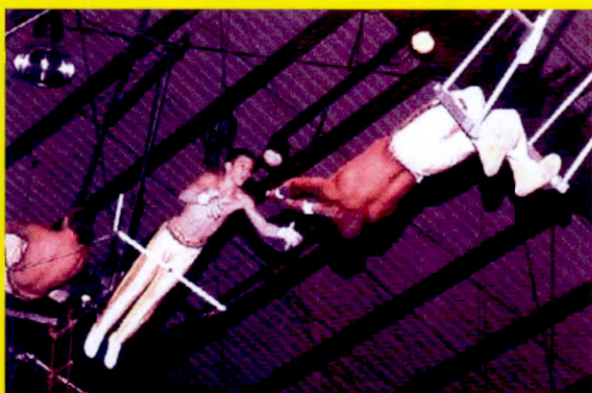
Dick Zigun continued to operate the Side Show by the Seashore at the corner of Surf Avenue and 12th Street at Coney Island. The 2007 season opened in April featuring Heather Holiday, the world's youngest female sword swallower; Mat Fraser, the seal boy; Ravi the Indian rubber boy and Jennifer Miller, the lady with a beard.

Ward Hall and Chris Christ's World of Wonders opened the season at the

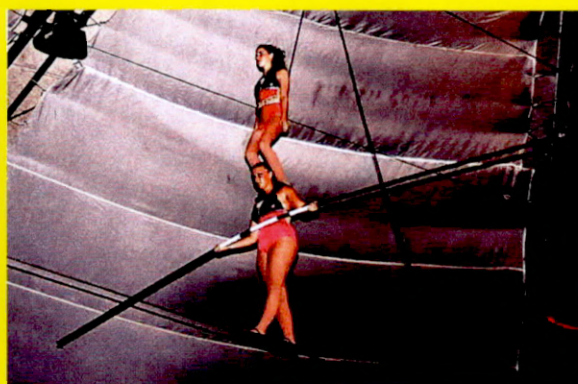
The World of Wonders cast at the Florida State Fair.



THE YOUTH CIRCUSES



The Peru Circus Flying Act.



PAL Sailor Circus High Wire.



A practice of the Fern Street Circus.



Setting up the Circus Smirkus tent.



The Wenatchee Youth Circus Roman Ladders.



The Russian American Kids Circus.

Photos from CFA Circus 4 Youth.

Meadowlands, New Jersey State Fair on June 21. The attractions included Brett Laudermilk, sword swallower; Logab Jacot, contortionist; Natash Robovia, iron tongue wonder; Sunshine English, pretzel girl; Diane G., electric lady; Rose Thorne, snakes; April Goins, fire eater; Rosita, spider girl illusion; and

Michael Vitka, tall man.

Ken Harck's Brothers Grim Side Show again toured with Ozzy Osborne's Ozzfest in 2007. It featured Zamora the Torture King; a half boy; the Wolf Boy; a bearded lady; a lizard man; Lucky Rich, full body and facial tattoo; GoGo Aimego, burlesque dancer; and

Ripley, headless girl.

The sixth annual side show gathering was held November 1-4 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The meeting was held at the same time as the Valley Tattoo Convention. The attractions included Col. Hundley's Freaks and Oddities; Zamora, the Torture King and the Cheeky



Ken Harck making an opening of the Brothers Grimm side show on Ozzfest.

The Wentatchee Youth Circus celebrated its fifty-fifth year in 2007.

Paul Pugh was managing director. The route was throughout the state of Washington. The show moved on two semi-trailers. A full kitchen provided meals for as many as eighty people.

The performance included swinging ladders; trampolines,

low wire, juggling, hula hoops, teeterboard, Spanish web, flying trapeze, tumbling, whips and high wire.

The San Diego's Fern Street Circus 2007 production was called Academia. It played Balboa Park in May.

The American Youth Circus Organization's 2007 Festival was held in Normal, Illinois, August 8-12. The program included four days of workshops, discussion groups, performances from youth troupes from around the country and two gala performances. The Gamma Phi Circus hosted the meeting.

The Circus World Museum opened on May 19. For the second year the Chinese acrobats performed in the Moeller Hippodrome. During the season Doug Terranova's Elephant Encounter was given at 10:45 and 4:30. Tristan Christ presented a magic show twice each day.



The Chinese show at the Circus World Museum.

The 2007 season was a financial turn-around. Attendance increased 16% to 56,273. Admission revenue increased to \$424,487, compared to \$385,714 the year before. Museum store sales were up 17% and restaurant sales were up 23%.



Keith Nelson in the summer edition of the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus. Fred Pfening photo.

Monkey side show.

Keith Nelson and Stephanie Monseu's Bindlestiff Family Cirkus played the Brooklyn Academy of Music festival in February. The summer variety show, titled the Magic Hat Summer Variety Show, presented 59 shows in 33 towns in 14 states. The performance was composed of Mr. Pennygraff; (Kieth Nelson) sword swallowing and clown; A. J. Silver, cowboy; Philomena, (Stephanie Monseu), bull whips and fire eating; Ariele Ebacher, tight wire and aerialist; Frederik Iversen, musician and Adam Kuchler, juggling clown.

The 20th anniversary tour of Circus Smirkus played Greensboro, Vermont on June 8. In 2007 the circus included 32 troupers. Ed LeClair was executive director. The performance was titled The Zoot Suit Capers, a Boogie Woogie Whodunnit.



The United States bandwagon in the Macy's Thanksgiving parade.

On June 24 a fundraiser called Circus of Chefs featured gourmet food tasting. On August 28 a fire in the restaurant destroyed the grill.

The United States bandwagon appeared in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. A select group of twelve musicians from the Windjammers Unlimited rode on the wagon. Paul Binder and others from the Big Apple Circus rode on a wagon just ahead of the bandwagon.

The offices of the Ringling Circus Museum were moved from the old

circus display building to the Art Museum's administration building. Fred Dahlinger joined the circus museum staff.

The International Circus Hall of Fame performance was given, July 7-29. John Fugate was ringmaster. The acts were Brian Franzen's tigers and elephants; Armando Cristiani, comedy trampoline; Anneli, sword balancing Irene Hristova, aerial half moon act, and hula hoops; and clown Pat Kelly. The Hall of Fame provided sixteen wagons for a parade staged at the Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis on August 13. No candidates were elected to the Hall of Fame in 2007.

The Showfolks of Sarasota Circus was held on December 1. John Herriott was ringmaster. The performance included miniature horses presented by Lisa, Kay and Pam Zoppe; clown Mitch Fredes; Timmy Hernandez, rope spinning and whips; Chelsea Delmonti, aerial lira; the Kim Family, horseback juggling; clown Nino (Giovanni Zoppe); Derick Rosaire, Jr. family, bears; Garcia Family, motorcycle globe; Lance Ramos, exotic animal act; Johnny Peers, dog act; Oscar Garcia, space wheel; Miss Rebecca, single traps; and the George Hanneford elephants.

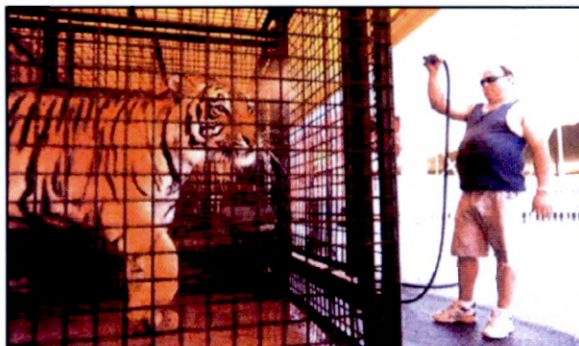
Kay Rosaire presented special animal shows at her Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast Sanctuary the weekends of March 17-18 and 24-25. The shows were held under a Alain Zerbini big top.

The Fearless Flores show played the Meadowlands fair on June 28.

Bob Moyer, who toured Bentley Bros. Circus in the past, toured an animal show in 2007. His Wambolt Circus Menagerie played the Ashville, North Carolina fair, September 11.

The Sarasota Circus Ring of Fame inducted Norma Davenport and her parents Ben and Eva; Franz Czeisler (Tihany); Cliff Vargas and Alberto Zoppe on January 21.

In 2007 Rev. George "Jerry" Hogan finished his fourteenth year in Circus Ministry. His schedule was adjusted between parish and circus. For the first time he was unable to publish



Bob Moyer hosing tigers down on his Wombolt Circus Menagerie. Photo by Ken Ruinard.

Troubadour. He visited the Cirque du Soleil headquarters in Montreal on June 12 and saw the new show Kooza. Hogan conducted Alan Hill's funeral in Sarasota on September 19. In 2007 he spent 115 days in circus ministry visiting sixteen shows.

A number of newspapers published articles on Father Hogan. This one appeared in the *Washington Post*. "Father Jerry Hogan is not just a circus priest. He is THE circus priest--the man who serves the thousands of clowns, acrobats, stuntmen and women, musicians, directors, animal trainers and costumers of the greatest shows on earth. He is the man who, for 14 years, has counseled them, listened to their confessions and been present on some of the most significant days of their lives--weddings, baptisms and funerals.

"It took some luck and strategy to catch up with him last week because Hogan is a man on the move.

Father Jerry Hogan blessing the 2007 Ringling Red train. Photo by Joe DeMike.



Wednesday morning, he was in Florida for the funeral of a circus owner who died of cancer. By early afternoon, he was on a plane to Dulles International Airport. And at 5:30 p.m., he stood under the big white tent of the Big Apple Circus at Dulles Town Center to perform

the annual show blessing before the opening of the circus's 30th anniversary tour.

"Once inside the gates, Hogan couldn't go two feet without someone stopping to touch him, hug him, shake his hand or say hello. In this world, he is a rock star. One man had his picture taken with Hogan and said, 'This is an honor,' as they smiled for the camera.

"Members of the Circus Fans Association of America know his name and seek him out at events.

"I'm the fourth priest in about 87 years now; the first was in the 1920s," Hogan said. Ironically, he was from Boston, Father Ed Sullivan. "I knew him as a kid."

"We work with people on the move--there's a priest that does race cars; another does carnivals. I have nuns that work with me, too," he said.

"Three of those nuns were visiting Wednesday. They are with the Little Sisters of Jesus, which specializes in working with circuses, carnivals and other migrant communities. One of the three, Sister Priscilla, is a native of Switzerland who came to the United States in 1978 and taught circus children for many years. (The Big Apple Circus has an entire trailer dedicated to a school and the young students who are part of the traveling families.)

"Hogan's home parish is in the Boston area, in North Andover. He's there every weekend to co-minister to the 5,000-family church. Of course, there's also the drawing power of the region's sports teams--he's a 37-year New England Patriots season-ticket holder and has a 10-game Red Sox package.

"Circus manager Don Covington explained that Hogan brings a bit of the outside life and perspective to the circus community. 'Father Jerry does a lot for all of us,' he said.

"One of Hogan's most significant contributions is the season-opening blessing. 'This is an intense time for them,' Hogan said. 'A prayer service calms them down; this is the first time they've changed the show [in a year] and they'll perform it for the public, so they're nervous.'"

Allan C. Hill, circus owner, went to the big lot in 2007.

PeTA continued to create problems for the circus industry. The long fought out case in Hartford, Connecticut that would have changed the way circuses control elephants came to an end on June 5. The bill sponsored by Representative Diana S. Uband, an animal rights sympathizer, failed in the General Assembly when she was unable to muster enough votes for passage. She then abandoned the bill

which would have banned the use of bullhooks. Circus fan Gary Payne and representatives of Ringling-Barnum played a large role in defeating the bill. The show stated it would be unable to play Bridgeport in the future if restricted in the use of bullhooks.

On September 25 the Ringling show was thrust into a battle featuring animal rights. Diverse issues came together in U. S. District Court as several animal rights groups asked a federal judge to relax restrictions on how close their protesters can come to circus patrons as they entered the Hartford arena. The animal rights groups had demonstrated each year when the circus came to town, standing outside the building in an effort to draw attention to the alleged mistreatment of animals.

District Judge Vanessa L. Bryant accepted a compromise that covered the opening of the show in Hartford. Animal rights attorney Derek Oatis argued that the First Amendment

required the city to allow protesters to stage demonstrations near the entrance to the arena.

The following members of the circus family passed on to the Big Lot in 2007:

Rose Alexander, flyer; Maran Burch, clown; Allan C. Hill, circus owner; Yaro Hoffman, wild animal trainer; George Hubler, circus owner; Don Leslie, sword swallower; Peter Lindemann, acrobat; Gaylord Maynard, performer; Harry Rawls, performer and manager; Rex Rossi, rodeo rider; Barrie Sloan, stilt walker; Frank Stephenson, dog trainer; Roberto Valenzuela, aerialist; Albert Rix, bear trainer; Lee Keener, elephant trainer; Pedro Morales, concession manager; and Duina Zacchini Norman, human cannibal.

The following contributed to this article: Pete Adams, Jan and Bill Biggerstaff, Chuck Burnes, Frank Felt, Renee Carpenter, Buddy Calhoun, Jerry Cash, Rich Deptula, Walt Hudson, Ray Gronso, Paul Gutheil, David L. Hammerstrom, John Hart, Maxine House, Paul Horsman, Walt Hudson, George Hubler, Paul Ingressia, Harry Lea Kingston, Doug Kruest, Brian LaPalme, Dan McGinnis, John Polacsek, William T. Patterson, Bill Rhodes, Bill Strong, Tim Tegge, John Wells, Buckles Woodcock, Herbert Ueckert, and Dom Yodice.



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Norma Davenport Cristiani

Growing Up on Ben Davenport's Wild Circus Provided Her A "Normal" Life

By Lane Talburt

PART TWO

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For 11-year-old Norma Davenport, on the other hand, her parents' circus provided a return to normalcy, pure and simple. After staying with relatives in Parkersburg, West Virginia, for two and a half years, Norma caught a plane at the end of the school year in May, 1942, out of Charleston, West Virginia, to Omaha, Nebraska, where she was met by her parents.

Unable to provide proper care for their daughter during the height of the Great Depression, circus owners Ben and Eva Davenport had dropped Norma off at the home of Ben's sister, Mary, and brother-in-law, Waldo Lawson, both of whom were educators in Parkersburg.

Since 1939, Norma had endured a daily regimen of awakening at the same time every morning, eating breakfast, with utensils, no less, getting dressed for school or church, saying nightly prayers and going to bed at an early hour.

In other words, it was boring, especially when compared to the unpredictable nature of displaying one's performing talents before two

different audiences of total strangers each day before trouping to the next town.

To top it off, the circus environment awaiting Norma was nothing like the one she had left a few years earlier. Where the former Davenport's Society Circus had been a one-ring affair, Dailey Bros. was the genuine, three-ring article. It boasted a new big top, side show and its first elephants. Norma took up residence in her parents' new Vagabond trailer, which was quite an improvement over the depression-era wooden cabin that Davenport had built and mounted on a pick-up truck. Inside the \$10,000 mobile home Norma slept on a pull-out sofa, separated by a partition from her parents' bed. Though the trailer had a sink, there was no running water.

There was no bathroom; instead, a pull-down padded seat disguised the

Norma was featured in this photo that appeared in a 1943 program.



commode. "I was shocked at the changes," Norma remembers.

Within a broader context, Americans had experienced a wild mood swing—from the pessimism of the Great Depression to the patriotism surrounding the U.S. entry into World War II.

And Norma got caught up in the patriotic fervor sweeping the nation six months after the U.S. had taken on the Axis powers with a vengeance. Standing in the center ring and surrounded by flag-waving performers, the young Norma opened each performance by singing a version of "America" that has since fallen into virtual oblivion.

Accompanied musical director Joe Rossi on cornet and the rest of his circus band, Norma belted out these words to a receptive crowd as showgirls raised initialized placards under the big top:

"A means you're Anybody's country.

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The patriotic opening, accented by red, white and blue bunting throughout the tent, never failed to bring the audience to its feet and to get the show off to a rousing start.

In addition, equestrian director Leon "Tiger Bill" Snyder asked servicemen in uniform to stand and receive their due recognition for fighting the enemies of freedom in Europe and Asia. Soldiers and sailors always got in free during the war years.



Leon "Tiger Bill" Snyder. Pfening Archives.

Crescendos of applause grew even louder when Raymond "Dog Red" Freivogal—presented Nemo, the only performing African male at the time. On Freivogal's command, Nemo approached the posted flags of three nations and tossed to the ground first the German flag and then the Japanese flag before picking up the staff of the American flag and waving it with his trunk around the ring. The audience cheered.

Anti-Japanese sentiment had an early impact on the Dailey Bros. performance roster. Head-balancer Si Kitchie was forced to report to a resettlement camp on the West Coast. In early 1942 President Roosevelt had signed an executive order resulting in the round-up of Americans of Japanese descent for the duration of the war.

"My dad went and got him released," Norma recalls, but for the remainder of the conflict, Si was billed as a Filipino on the Dailey show. He was assisted by his wife, Nellie, a native of England.

Entertainment-deprived circus patrons were encouraged to support the all-out effort to expand America's

fighting machine, which was woefully deficient at the outset.

In a 1942 newspaper interview, Eva Davenport said, "I have defense stamps right there, and there hasn't been a night yet that I haven't sold at least \$25 worth, and sometimes it runs as high as \$50.

"We pay off our help every night," the co-owner confided. "Even the lowest paid man with us buys at least a 10-cent stamp every night. I keep the books for them and put them in the books."

Outside the big top, fans also were encouraged to leave behind even more of their earnings with the grifters who offered crooked diversions such as three-card-monte and pea-under-the shell games.

"Grift moved the show," Norma states simply and unapologetically as she reflects back on her Dailey Bros. experiences while sitting in the comfort of her permanently moored trailer home that she shares with Pete Cristiani in Sarasota, Florida.

Ms. Cristiani credits Cole Bros. co-owner Zack Terrell for being her father's inspiration to add grift to the Dailey show. Of course, Ben had grown accustomed to the racket-style games while performing on the

Raymond "Red Dog" Feivogal. Pfening Archives.



Milt Holland Indoor Show in the 1930s.

But Norma insists that the notorious grift was only one factor responsible for the undoing of her family's fortunes in 1950. She places the blame on Ben Davenport's later partner, Harry Hammill, for making the ill-fated decision to retrace the same Canadian route which had produced a financial windfall in 1949.



Charles "Butch" Cohn. Pfening Archives.

While chatting with a reporter from the Marysville, Kansas, *Advocate-Democrat* on September 12, 1942, Eva Davenport unknowingly predicted the show's demise:

"People won't come back a second year to see the same circus," said Mrs. Davenport. She was making this statement in explaining why the show's name had been changed in 1940 to Dailey Bros. from Davenport's Society Circus. (See sidebar story on how the new circus got its name.)

Throughout their marital partnership, the Davenports had plowed their earnings back into the show, always expanding its size and constantly improving its performance.

The couple's decision in late 1939 to shelve their Princess Iola medicine show and the Society Circus marked a significant change from year-round touring to the more traditional spring-to-fall schedule. Davenport, however, did lease his animal acts to Shrine circus producers during the winter.

From their temporary quarters in Aransas Pass, Texas, they launched

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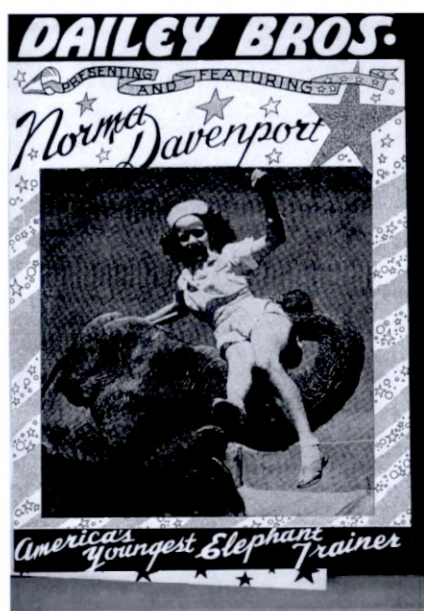
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bears through their paces. But audiences didn't seem to notice that Freivogel was performing under the influence.

Dailey Bros. originated its 1940 and '41 seasons in Texas, playing only two desert California eastern border towns—Barstow and Needles—to avoid a strict state fire law intended to protect its forests. Davenport's canvas was not fire-retardant.



R. M. Harvry, general agent. Pfening Archives.

The rough, narrow highways took their toll on Dailey Bros. trucks—and obviously their drivers, as indicated by this August 23, 1941, *Billboard* account from Roundup, Montana: "The elephant truck carrying Rosie and Nemo has turned over three times recently but without serious injury to the truck or the bulls. Lately the calliope was wrecked and the pipes were turned in on a new machine to be picked up at Miles City, Montana."

The truck-mounted steam calliope had attracted crowds to Parker & Watts Circus in the late 1930s before Davenport acquired it for his new tent show. Eva Davenport, who had played a calliope on her Princess Iola side show, handed over that duty on Dailey Bros. to her best friend, Bertha Drane.

Mrs. Drane's two daughters, Virginia Smith, Charlie Smith's wife at the time, and Mildred Pyle, the spouse of assistant canvas boss Paul Pyle, performed numerous aerial turns in the small big top. Billie

Gillem, Eva's daughter from her first marriage, was a crowd-pleaser with her cloud-swing routine. *Billboard* reported that Roy Beavers and Walter Schyler (Annabelle the clown) were presenting Rosie and Nemo as single-bull acts, although Red Freivogel was certain to be close by any time the unpredictable male was in the big top.

Under the masterful routing of General Agent R. M. Harvey—a veteran from the old Barnum & Bailey days, Dailey Bros. successfully played the Midwestern wheat belt before closing the season in Seguin, Texas, in late November.

The 1941 season was the last before World War II restrictions hit the nation, according to the excellent series of 1970 *Bandwagon* articles by historian Leland Antes, Jr.

And the impact of diverting basic resources, especially rubber and fuel, to the war effort was felt immediately by Dailey Bros. and other truck shows. The offset, of course, was that circuses found business prosperous if they could reach the numerous, widely-scattered communities boasting war-armament plants. (The author recalls a U. S. Navy ammunitions depot providing thousands of wartime jobs in his hometown of McAlester, Oklahoma.)

During her 1942 interview in Marysville, Kansas, Eva Davenport said gasoline rationing was a particular concern.

"Yesterday. . . I wrote to Washington and asked them what about it. They say they want amusements and recreation to keep on, but we have no priorities or anything. If they don't allow us any, we'll probably have to go out by rail next year, and I don't like that." Her prediction was accurate, but the change to rails was delayed until 1944.

Eva was able to help the show weather its shortages by anticipating the problem and buying supplies in lots. "Last November when we went to winter quarters," Mrs. Davenport told the Kansas reporter, "I stopped in a town in Texas where there's a dealer in tires. He had more tires than I had ever seen before, and before I knew it, I had bought over \$2,000 worth. That's all that has kept us on the road this year. Even at that we've worn out a lot of them, and I've



Louis Reed and Adele Nelson. Pfening Archives.

had to buy a whole truck to get four or five tires."

Norma remembers her mother paying up to \$100 for a tire, and "it didn't have any rubber on it."

In late 1942, Davenport acquired Adele Nelson's three baseball-playing elephants—Myrtle the pitcher, Tillie the catcher, and Home Run Jenny—and their trailer. Along with them came Adele's husband, Louis Reed, of Chatham, New York. Miss Nelson was no longer performing by that time but occasionally visited her husband on the road.

Reed, formerly on the Charles Sparks rail circus, became Norma's mentor in preparing the trio of bulls for the 1943 season. Norma, at age 12, would be billed as the world's youngest elephant trainer.

During 1943, Davenport also purchased the five Weir, or "Coca Cola," elephants—Mary, Trixie, Cutie, Luna and Hank, all females. To replace Mary, who died a few years later due to accidental poisoning on a lot in Galveston, Texas, the circus owner bought another Asian, Lucy, who had killed one of her handlers on another show.

Reed trained Norma to work the eight elephants—the Nelson trio and the five Weir bulls—in separate routines.

Ms. Cristiani describes Reed as a "nice gentlemen," but admitted he was gruff with handlers. When working the elephants. "Goddamn you, Myrtle, get over here," Norma

remembers the aging trainer shouting. At the same time, she points out, "Louie wasn't vicious when he was breaking elephants. Some [trainers] used hot-shots; he didn't do that stuff. He'd teach them to lay down on both sides, this way and that."

Reed gave instructions to Norma on the "classic" way to ride an elephant in the spec, with her legs crossed over the bull's head. Today, showgirls straddle the elephant's neck and tuck their knees behind its ears to hang on. Reed also taught her to work Hank, "the hula elephant," in a single turn.

Norma also recalls Hank giving Rex Williams, then a 16-year-old first-of-May on Dailey Bros., a trainer-beware lesson in working around pachyderms. In his very first spec, Williams was casually following Hank, Norma recalls, when "Hank slapped him [with her trunk] and knocked him all around. I think he got knocked clear into the reserve seats." And with that, Norma erupts into laughter.

Interviewed by Garnet Pasquale for a 1994 *White Tops* article, Williams recalls that the Weir elephants "knocked the fire out of everybody, me included, when they first got there." Williams noted that "during the war...they weren't importing anything. All you could get were those old reject elephants that they left standing up in the barn for four or five years."

Within a few years, Williams would become a wizened elephant trainer. In 1950 on Dailey, he presented a caged act featuring a tiger riding on a bull.

Robert Jones was another bull trainer who got his start—and his nickname, "Smokey," on the Dailey show. As Jones wrote in a 1994 article for *White Tops*, "I had been riding freight trains and I had coal dust all over me. . . . Willie Rawls, who painted Dailey Bros. Circus. . . called me 'Smoke Stack,' then 'Train Smoke,' and finally, 'Smokey.'"

Smokey was hired in 1943, initially working with Charlie Smith on the big top crew. He was promised a job on the elephant line when the circus reached Gonzales, Texas, which was to become the show's permanent



Ben Davenport and his three elephants in 1943.

winter quarters at the end of the season.

Like many other youths that Davenport brought into the business during and after the depression years, Jones had endured troubled times.

Recalls Norma, "Smokey had a terrible life" before joining the show. "He was raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He had stolen something when he was about 15 and had been put on a chain gang. Can you imagine? And he showed a bunch of us how you could get out of your pants with leg chains on."

Norma also remembers that Jones' father "was a brutal man to him when he was in Gonzales." (Davenport bought the Gonzales, Texas, fairgrounds in 1943, converting it into the show's permanent winter quarters.)

Jones later wrote in his *White Tops* article, "Of everything I've done, Dailey Bros. was absolutely the most important part of my life." And that was significant, especially in light of his later having become superintendent over the legendary 50-elephant herd on Ringling Bros. in 1955.

Duke Keller was another youth who joined the circus in a successful attempt to put a checkered past

The Dailey big top in 1942. Circus World Museum collection.



behind him. "He was one of those kids from Chicago. . . . I don't know what [mischief] he did, but they used to put troubled youth out on farms during the summer to help with the crops. And that's where Duke was the day he came out to see the circus."

"He loved horses and ponies. So he asked Hazel King [a veteran horse trainer and performer on Cole Bros.], 'Do you ever hire anybody?' And she said, 'Yes. But you've got to get somebody over here to give you permission to go with the circus.' So he did."

"On the circus, you don't have time to get in trouble," Ms. Cristiani explains. "You're running all the time, getting water for the animals, putting up the big top. 'You're surviving—and it's exciting. You don't have time to get into trouble."

"That's why I'd say people that weren't born into this business are probably more circus-minded than the people that are 'with it.'" Ms. Cristiani insists.

The 14-year-old Keller, among other youth, thrived in the new environment. He always took care of the ponies, leaving only when Dailey Bros. closed in 1950. He resumed his townie's lifestyle but returned over the years to visit the Davenports on other shows.

More than likely the circus owner's empathy for stray youth came from his own prison experience in his late teens. Young Davenport and a cohort had served a year and a half of a five-year sentence in a Mansfield, Ohio, prison for stealing tires from an employer.

While Davenport left it up to his experienced department heads to break in the newcomers, he took considerable care to familiarize his impressionable young daughter about all aspects of the show's day-to-day operations.

Through the early war years, the Dailey Bros. caravan pulled out of "yesterday's lot" in the morning and traveled to "today's lot" on narrow highways. Eva Davenport

pulled the family trailer while her husband drove the last truck in the fleet, often with Norma at his side. "My mother didn't like that because my dad was a terrible driver."

"He would stop at every junkyard we came to" along the route, Norma recalls. Davenport was always on the lookout for any decrepit Ford auto. He would bargain for the car's axles, which he then converted to gear-head stakes to secure the show's big top.

"I remember one time the lion truck turned over in a ditch. Nobody was hurt. We had Louie Reed's elephants back, and daddy got them out of their trailer. Tillie was pulling [the overturned trailer], and I was on the back with Jenny. She pushed. So they pulled the trailer upright first. Then he put Myrtle in front."

Before giving the order for the bulls to pull the trailer back onto the roadway, Davenport took a last look around. Sighting Norma standing between Jenny and the back of the truck, he walked up to his daughter, slapping her in the face for the first and only time in her life.

"You're on the wrong side of those elephants," Davenport shouted. "And they'll shove you in and kill you. How many times have I told you, never stand between the elephant and a hard place," Davenport shouted. "They'll shove you in and kill you." You always stand beside the elephant. You call them by their name. You never approach them from the rear."

"And I was crying," Norma recalls, smiling. . . "And daddy says, 'Get ready, goddammit.' Then we got the trailer out. But I thought about that for years, because it saved me. I was trained like that, you know. I never did that again."

As World War II intensified, the circus lost a number of workers who either volunteered or were drafted into the armed services. Norma's half-brother, Galen Merriam, left in 1940 to become a sailor. He saw submarine duty during his 10 years in the Navy. He never returned to the circus, choosing instead a career as a diesel mechanic.

Charlie Smith, who had joined the Davenports in 1934, left at the end of the 1943. To contribute his services to the war effort, Smith went to

Coleman, Texas, to pack parachutes. His new employer was Harry A. Hammill. Smith introduced him to his former circus boss. Hammill, in turn, contracted Dailey Bros. for private performances at his flying fields in Coleman and Stamford, Texas. In 1945 Hammill and Davenport became partners on the short-lived Austin Bros. Circus. They also jointly took out Dailey Bros. for its 1949-50 seasons.

Charlie Smith joined other circuses following Japan's surrender in 1945, but eventually returned to Davenport to work a chimp act and sell novelties on a merchants' street circus in the early 1950s.

In a 2000 interview with the author, Smith said Dailey Bros. enabled him to become a welder at winter quarters. He recalled the circus wintering in Aransas Pass, Seguin and, finally, Gonzales, Texas, during his Dailey tenure. Following service in the Navy, he later employed his well-honed welding skills repeatedly on other circuses, including the King, Cole, and Ringling shows. Smith said he also was involved in routing Dailey Bros. in its early years.

After helping Louis Reed break in the Weir elephants, Rex Williams also left the Dailey show to serve in the Marine Corps. Norma again laughs as she explains how her mother later interceded with the Marines on Williams' behalf. "Rex got thrown into the brig for something, and mother wrote a letter saying the circus couldn't go on without him, that he was the only one that could handle an elephant. They let him out."

Thanks to an older cadre of workers, some accompanied by their spouses and children, the circus continued to prosper even as it endured shortages of labor and vital replacement parts for its vehicles. Lack of personnel and inclement weather hindered the show on numerous dates.

A fierce thunderstorm struck the circus at Eastland, Texas, in early 1942. Eve Davenport reported that hail stones punched more than 1,500 holes in the big top and other tents. Norma remembers taking shelter with other circus hands in a store across the street. No injuries were reported.

While touring the Western states, "I remember a three or four-day period when the winds stirred up so much sand that I couldn't even see the people in the audience while I was performing. And I know they had a hard time seeing us."

A violent truck crash claimed the lives of two workmen and a horse when the vehicle's brakes failed on a steep highway incline.

Ernie Burch on Dailey Bros. in 1943. Pfening Archives.



Performers did enjoy moments of welcome relief from the mud and the wind, as well as tedium of the twice-daily performances. During a

Sunday layover in Gainesville, Texas, 12-year-old Norma learned couples dancing (she had been a tap-dancer on her mother's medicine show). Her escort was Ernie Burch, later to become "Blinko the clown" on Ringling Bros., who made his professional debut with Dailey Bros. in 1941. Burch, at age 16, joined a clown alley that included Walter Schlyer, aka Annabelle, a veteran trouper with the Davenports since the Princess Iola medicine show days.

Norma remembers going with Burch to a Mexican wedding in a building on the corner of the fairgrounds after the big top poles had been raised and the canvas rolled up for the next day's performances. "They've got a dance over there," Burch told Norma's mother, "and anybody can go."

"They had an orchestra," Norma recalls. "Nobody asked us who we were, what we were doing or anything else."

"Ernie and I jitterbugged most of

the time. Then we'd square dance, and then we'd two-step. We danced until the thing closed down that night. I had the best time I had ever had."

Burch, who had aspired to be a Hollywood make-up artist, pitched a dressing tent on each lot, where he would put on his various costumes.

"And do you know, my one ambition in life was to have a tent and a Coleman lantern of my own," Mrs. Cristiani reminisces 65 years later.

"But I would go in there, and Ernie used to make me up. And for a young kid, that was wonderful. I remember, he used to put the red dots [below her eyes]. And I asked, 'Why do you do that?' He said, 'It makes your eyes look bigger.'"

"Ernie was a wonderful friend of mine. I saw him the day before he died" in 1997 of cancer in Sarasota.

Ever-tightening war restrictions finally convinced Ben Davenports to make the change from trucks to rails. At the end of the 1943 season, Dailey Bros. returned to the first lot it played that year—the fairgrounds at Gonzales, Texas, which was served by a rail line spur. The Davenports purchased the property as their new winter quarters and, with the help of Tiger Bill Snyder, a skilled circus builder, refitted the existing semi-trailers to fit on railroad flatcars.

While general agent R. M. Harvey plotted the route for the following year, Ben Davenport journeyed to Caruthersville, Missouri, to buy nine train cars from the then defunct Rubin & Cherry carnival.

Even at the point of purchasing the battered cars from carnival owner Sid Solomon, reveals Norma, her father was reluctant to give up his all-too-familiar methods of transporting the circus on ribbons of concrete.

Norma recalls him calling her mother from the Missouri boot-heel town.

"Eva," Ben said, "I don't know whether I should buy these cars."

"You do have the \$20,000 in cash with you?" Eva asked impatiently.

"Yes," replied Ben.

"Then I don't see the problem," was Eva's retort.

Davenport had to replace one of the cars due to a vagrant-caused fire in the Dallas rail yards. The replace-



The Dailey Bros. midway in 1943. Circus World Museum collection.

ment came from Cole Bros.

Davenport purchased yet another car from the Hennies Bros. Carnival. Norma recalls that Willie Rawls painted the pieced-together collection of cars in silver trim, with red lettering. Rawls' duties on the road included selling side show tickets. Willie's son, Harry Rawls, performed in the Wild West concert.

About that same time, Jean Allen switched from Cole to Dailey Bros. to help Norma with the newly acquired five Weir elephants and to perform in equestrian routines. And Hazel King, formerly of Parker & Watts Circus, came over to help train Norma to become an equestrian, as well as to perform herself. Ms. King would remain a Dailey Bros. stalwart to the bitter end.

After opening in its new hometown on April 1, 1944, the Dailey Bros. Railroad Circus pulled out of Gonzales on ten cars. The new trainmaster was Pete Lindemann, Ben's old boss on the Seils-Sterling show. The Davenport family occupied a portion of the married performers' sleeping car.

Thus began a new adventure for the 13-year-old Norma Davenport.

(Next: Norma takes on greater responsibilities as Ben and Eva Davenport's mighty railroad circus expands to five rings, then derails financially.)

In addition to a series of interviews with Norma Davenport Cristiani and Charlie Smith, the author drew from articles published in *Bandwagon*, *White Tops* and *Billboard* magazines, as well as the *Marysville, Kansas, Advocate-Democrat*, and the *Quincy, Illinois, Herald-Whig*.

BROS., CAN YOU SPARE
A DAME FOR A NAME?

What married man would have the gall to name a circus after an old girlfriend?

Try Ben Davenport, for starters.

If Norma Davenport Cristiani's story is correct—and she insists it is, her father chose the "Dailey Bros." title in 1940 with the help of an old friend, Eddie Starr of Delaware, Ohio. Starr reminded Ben that he had dated Helen Dailey during his high school days.

And that, says Norma, is how the circus got its name.

Eva Davenport, Ben's wife and the show's co-owner, was apparently unaware of this tidbit of information when she told a newspaper reporter in 1942 that:

"I don't know why we chose Dailey Bros., except that it's part of circus to have the brothers in it, and maybe we decided on Dailey because we show daily."

In a 1946 interview, Norma's mother continued with a similar explanation: "In show business," said Mrs. Davenport, "you want something short and snappy that will go good in a display line. So my husband, with simple reasoning, said, 'We show daily, why not call it the Daily circus?' We compromised by putting an 'e' in it."

Eva wasn't too amused when she eventually found out about her husband's deception, but, says Norma, "We've laughed about this ever since. Even my mother laughed about it later on."

Since there were no Dailey brothers, any one who asked to speak with "Mr. Dailey" was immediately suspect.

Sometimes, Davenport would designate a specific employee to fill the role. Just as often, however, the inquisitor (more than likely either a cop or a process server) would be directed to stand by the lion's cage until "Mr. Dailey" could be located.

As Leland Antes Jr. pointed out in his 1970 *Bandwagon* series, "Usually one of the big cats would show his displeasure with things in general, and the lawmen would suddenly have the urge to go home and change clothes, thus forgetting what they had gone to the lot for in the first place."

WILSON'S GREAT WORLD CIRCUS, AUGUST 1883: THE VOLCANO, A VERY SMALL ELEPHANT AND THE CANNONBALL KING

By Joe Parker

This paper was presented at the 2007 Circus Historical Society convention.

This is a sidebar story, one written to cast light on a minor aspect of circus history. It's the story of a coincidence I read about in a book about a volcano: an American circus was nearby when a world historical event occurred. When I read about the coincidence, I knew I had a paper of an example of how the circus can connect us to an event in the real world.

On Monday, July 30, 1883, John Wilson's Great World Circus arrived by ship at Batavia, Java, for a month-long stand. Batavia, the prosperous, bustling capital of the Dutch colonies in Indonesia, eagerly anticipated the return of the circus. John Wilson was an experienced hand at the circus business. Born in Scotland in 1829, he migrated to the United States in his late teens, worked as a butcher, clerk, and window dresser in New York, then moved to San Francisco. In 1859, he bought the Sands, Nathan and Quick elephants, named Victoria and Albert, for \$22,000; these were the first elephants to be exhibited on the West Coast, a great novelty and success. He toured his show through Northern California and Oregon in 1860 and 1861 as John Wilson's "Dan Rice's" Great Show, and in 1862 as The Mammoth Circus and Hippodrome and Joe Pentland's Great World Circus. It's unclear if he licensed the use of those famous names. Wilson remained based in San Francisco until the 1870's, touring the west coast, but apparently he early on decided to venture overseas, as he is known to have gone to South America in 1859, and taken his surviving elephant, Albert, with a circus to Hawaii and the Orient in 1860-1862, and to Australia in 1866-1868. He stopped touring in the United States in 1875, taking his circus at that time to China, India, and,



Newspaper ad used by Wilson. All illustrations are from the author.

at least once before, to Batavia. John Wilson did not come to Batavia in 1883. He was away, recruiting new performers, leaving his wife, Anna, in charge of the circus.

The Krakatoa, long dormant, began to warm up for its act. At 10:30 a.m. on Sunday May 20, an eruption blew an ever-growing plume of white ash an estimated seven miles high. The corresponding shockwave in the air took 25 minutes to reach Batavia, 83 air miles away. At 10:55, it shook a Delft dinner-plate off the dining table of Dr. J.P. van der Stok, the meteorologist in charge of the weath-

er station at Batavia. Ash fell on Batavia that evening; the long-sleeping volcano was now certainly awake, and rehearsing for the big day.

Although Wilson had brought his show to Batavia before, the Great World Circus had new wonders to present. First, it had a spectacular new tent, dubbed the "Mammoth" by the proprietor's wife. It was said to seat 5,000

spectators in gas-lamp illuminated comfort. The Wilsons brought twenty Arabian horses and "a hundred acts," including: a pigeon charmer; a Risley act; Robert Nelson, Sr. with his sons Arthur and Robert, Jr.; Hector and Fane, English "Lords of the Trapeze;" Fraulein Jeanette and her Amazing Bareback Riders; William Gregory, the Gymnast King; and "dozens of clowns." On August 22, the Batavia Cricket Club had a match with eleven of the clowns, all in circus costume. The Cricket Club won handily.

All the performers stayed at the Hotel des Indes, reputed to be the finest, most elegant hotel in the

The Batavia harbour and canal.



Dutch colonies. On one well-reported, exciting night, the performers, while drinking champagne in the hotel bar, began to boast to one another of their skills. Sparked by jealousy and alcohol, hot words were exchanged, then glasses, wine, beer, food, fists, etc. Anna Wilson was hit in the face, and one performer got a badly bitten cheek. The town was greatly entertained.

The circus also had a very small elephant. His trainer, Miss Nanette Lochart, claimed it was the smallest trained pachyderm in world history. The only fact I have regarding his size is that his trunk was said to be three-feet long. He was a native of Java, and everyone was thrilled to welcome him back to his native island, watch him step from tub to tub, walk an obstacle course, and juggle.

Midway through August, Miss Nanette made an error in judgment. She decided her elephant shouldn't stay at the circus grounds, but would be safer and happier staying in her hotel room. So, without telling the hotel, she snuck her very small elephant into her room, told him good-night, locked the door, and went out to dinner.

I don't know if the elephant was lonely, scared, or just didn't like the decorating, but he proceeded to trash the room. He smashed the furniture, tore up the drapes, trumpeted his unhappiness, and stamped around the room, shaking the building, undoubtedly making the other guests think there was an earthquake, at the very least. The owner of the Hotel des Indes, Louis Cressonier, decided he was no longer a circus fan. He ordered Miss Lochart, her elephant, and all the other circus performers and their animals, if any, out of his hotel immediately. They all found quarters in other

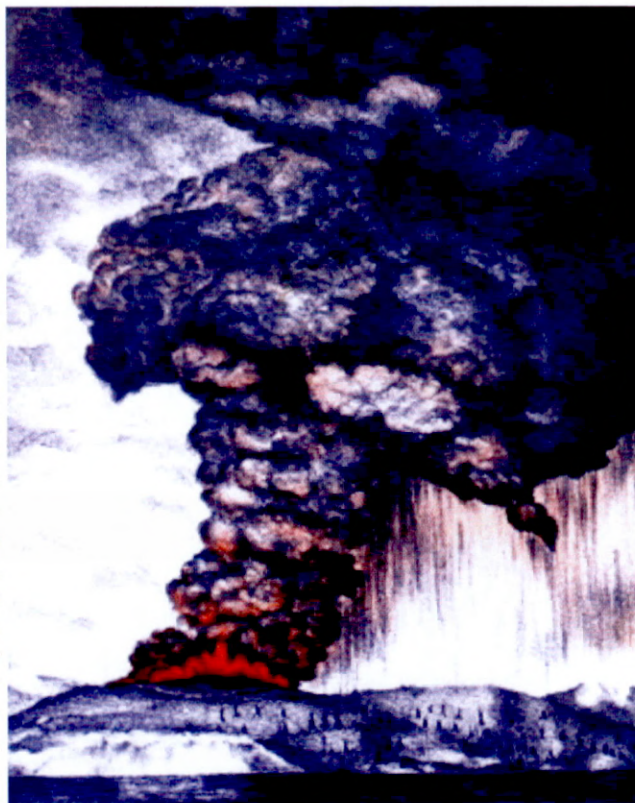


The Hotel des Indes in Batavia.

hotels in town. The little elephant went back to the circus grounds.

On Sunday, August 20, Krakatoa gave a dress rehearsal. In a sequence of eruptions and explosions, it gener-

The eruption of Krakatoa.



ated multiple pumice falls and tsunami waves. The waves were up to a hundred feet tall. A Dutch official and his family survived it by out running the wave up a 120-foot hill in the jungle to his summerhouse at the top. He reported the wave came within ten feet of his house.

John Holtum, "the Cannonball King," a professional strong man and juggler, was the star of the Wilson's show. On a playbill from 1880 his routine is stated as: 100 different feats with 20, 30, and 60 pound cannon balls; champion Indian club exercises, with new and astonishing evolutions never before witnessed; against two powerful horses, lying stretched on a ladder or gate, "a challenger will receive a cash reward if the horses success in pulling him away;" against two powerful men with his teeth, "a cash reward will be given to each if they succeed, with a steady pull only, to pull Mr. Holtum over a certain mark;" firing a small cannon loaded with powder and ball, whilst holding it in his teeth; against two powerful horses, standing upright as they attempted to pull him off balance; firing from his shoulder a 400-lb cannon loaded with powder and ball; and his most famous feat, catching a 15 pound cannonball fired from a distance of 12 feet, and from 50 feet, using the 400 pound cannon.

Born October 29, 1845, in Haderslev, Denmark, Holtum was a merchant seaman in his youth. In 1865, he joined the Lee and Ryland Circus in San Francisco as an acrobat. He toured the west coast and Mexico with them and performed as an acrobat in New York City. He returned to Europe in 1870, and very nearly was drafted into the Prussian army. Apparently some of his advertisements said he was German, not Danish. Perhaps his brush



John Holtum featured at the Folies Bergere in Paris.

with the army gave him the idea to catch cannonballs, because he bought a military cannon in Birmingham England, in January 1872, and taught himself to catch the cannonball in flight. He lost a finger on his left hand learning the trick, but he seems not to have been injured again. To catch the cannonballs, he wore thick leather gloves and, according to one promotional blurb, "on his chest is fixed a cannon-ball-proof cuirass of considerable thickness." Personally, I wouldn't want to test first-hand how cannon-ball-proof it was.

He offered a reward to any man in the audience who could catch a cannonball. Remarkably, 161 volunteers had tried by the time the "king of the cannon" performed in Batavia. Several Batavians, including a gentleman named Mr. Thor took up his challenge. None of them succeeded, but then again, none of them died or were maimed. Holtum toured Europe and America, and had performed before the Kings of Italy, Sweden, and Denmark, the Emperor of Russia, the Crown Princes of Germany and Sweden, and President Ulysses Grant. He was a real star,

often in music hall, and vaudeville-type shows as well as circuses. The Batavians loved his performances, too. The circus played to packed houses every single day, and twice on Saturday. Everyone was having a grand time.

On the morning of Monday, August 27, Krakatoa began a series of preliminary explosions. At 4 a. m. the first explosion lifted a cloud of ash that started Java's day without sunshine. The skies over Batavia darkened with ash before the dawn--which did not come. At 5:30

a.m. a second eruption threw out waves that devastated the nearest towns, followed by another 6:44, and then at 8:20, the fourth and final warm-up eruption created a tsunami that swept a hundred-foot tall iron lighthouse from its foundation, and deposited the steel Dutch warship *Berouw* one-quarter-mile inland. It landed completely intact, but all 28 crewmen were killed.

At 10:02 a. m. came the main act. Krakatoa obliterated itself in an explosion said to be the loudest sound ever heard by man; it was heard nearly three thousand miles away. The island of Krakatoa had previously reached a peak height of 1300 feet above sea level. The blast leveled most of the island to 750 feet below sea level. The rough volume of island that disappeared is computed at six cubic miles. Pumice, ash, and dust were thrown to an altitude of 24 miles, over 120,000 feet. The dust stayed in the stratosphere for years, changing the colors of dawns and sunsets all over the world. "Sunset, Chelsea, London, November 26, 1883," by the painter William Ascroft illustrates the effect.

The eruption generated tsunamis over 120 feet high that devastated nearby coastlines. The steamship *Berouw* was picked up again, carried over a mile inland, and left 30 feet above sea level. The tsunami's effect on sea level was noticed in the south of France, and the air pressure wave generated by Krakatoa circled the planet seven times before dissipating completely. The final death toll was 36,417 lives.

What happened in Batavia? The day stayed gray and gloomy all day then starting at 10:00 a. m. The temperature fell from the normal 80 to the mid-60s in four hours. At 12:30 p. m., the first storm wave hit, raising

A herald featuring Herr Holtum.

Lambeth Gymnasium,
WHITEHART STREET, LONDON, S.E. 1.

Herr Holtum's
CHALLENGE
Against Horse & Man accepted.

2 Extraordinary Athletic Feats, one at 4 o'clock, and another at 5 o'clock.

ON GOOD FRIDAY.

Admission - - 6d. and 1s.

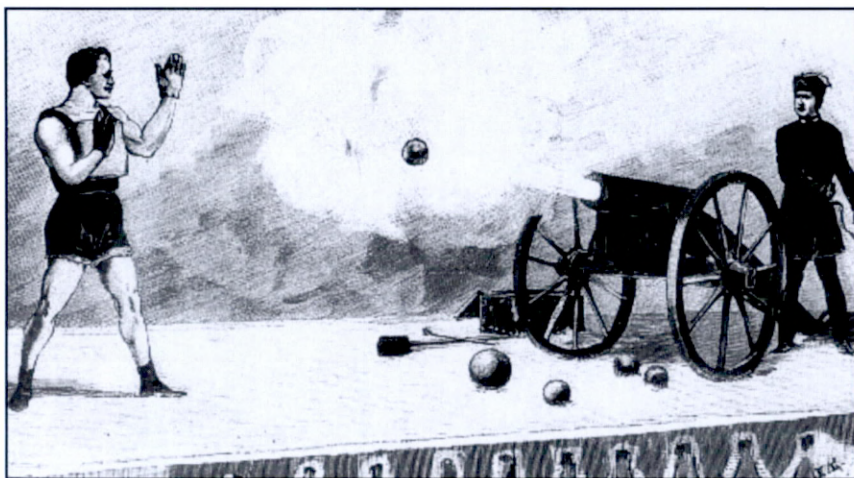
On this occasion these famous and World renowned Athlete will accomplish the following unparalleled feat never before attempted by any other living Athlete in the History of the Profession, viz:-

1. Holtum is over 100 different Feats, with rifle, pistol, and other various arms.
2. The Death Shot. Firing at a Target with a 10-lb. Ball. Something to be done, at 100 yds. The Cannon is usually loaded with Flour only.
3. Holtum Catching the same Ball fired from the Cannon.
4. Holtum in his Champion Indian Club Exercises.
5. Holtum against 2 Powerful Horses. Extraordinary on a horse's back. 40. Various other Exercises. The Cannon, Heavy Shot, Cannon-ball, loaded with Flour, and will load in 20 seconds the Cannon in 10 seconds.
6. Holtum catching the 10-lb. Ball fired from the Cannon on a distance of 100 yds.
7. Holtum against 4 Powerful Men with his Teeth.
8. Holtum firing small Cannon loaded with Powder and Ball.
9. Holtum against 2 Horses, standing upright.
10. Holtum firing from his Shoulder 400-lb. heavy cannon.

Loaded with Ball and Powder.

Entrance open at 3, and 5 o'clock, commencing at 4, and 5 o'clock precisely.

L. CARTER, THAMES ST. BUILDING, LONDON, S.E. 1.



John Holtum's cannon act.

the water level almost eight feet before dropping to ten feet below normal. While part of the city was swamped by the waves, no one in Batavia was killed by the catastrophe. There is no record that the circus performed that night.

What happened after the explosion? The circus gave several benefit performances for the survivors before leaving Java in early September for Singapore, and then India. Outwardly untouched by Krakatoa, John Wilson continued around the world. He died August 4, 1885, in Hamburg while on tour with his circus in Germany. Batavia remained the capital of the Dutch colonies in Indonesia. When Indonesia became independent after World War II, Batavia, now renamed Jakarta, became the national capital. John Holtum continued to perform as "the Cannonball King" through at least 1895. He married a fellow circus performer, Anne Robinson, and had two children. He passed away, back home in Haderslev, Denmark, in 1919.

On January 26, 1928, Anak Krakatau, the "Son of Krakatoa," appeared above the waters where Krakatoa had been. Pushed by volcanic activity from below, it continues to grow, getting approximately twenty feet taller and forty feet larger in diameter every year. Anak Krakatau erupts almost every year on a greatly reduced scale.

I don't know what happened to Nanette Lochart and her very small elephant: I am pretty sure, however,

that she never kept the elephant in her hotel room again.

If you want to learn more about the events surrounding the Krakatoa

cataclysm, let me whole-heartedly recommend Simon Winchester's *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded, August 27, 1883*. It's a fascinating book, and it's where I found the inspiration for this paper, and much of its content.

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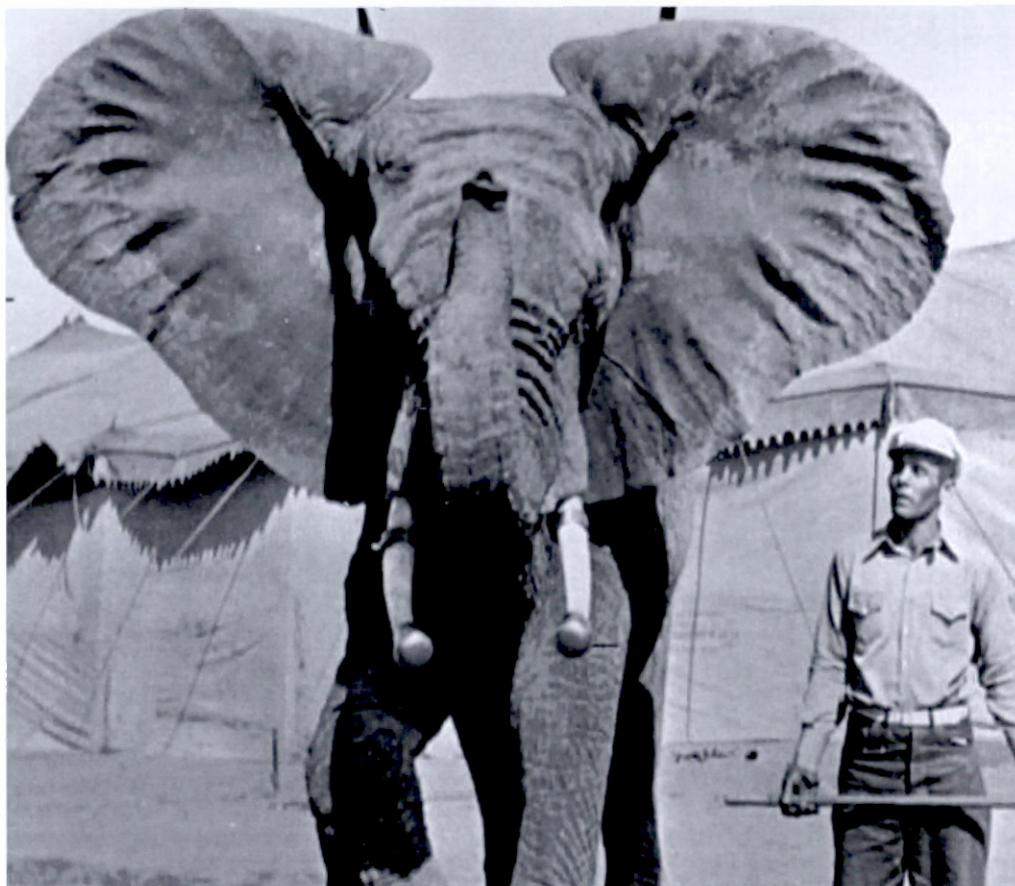
Bill Woodcock's Circus Album

Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell managed to accumulate 17 elephants for the opening of their new Cole Bros. Circus in 1935. Most notable was the 101 Ranch herd presented by Eddie and Jean Allen as well as nine from William P. Hall's farm. They also got three from zoos. Midway in the season they received the last of the Hall elephants, bringing the herd to 26.

The first photo is of Ace Donovan with Safari who was purchased from the Detroit Zoo. At first it was thought he would have to be transported to and from the lot by wagon, but as it turned out he was no trouble at all and fit right into the program. In the press he was given the name Jumbo II.

Hugo Schmidt once told me that he personally delivered Safari to Detroit from the Hagenbeck Zoo in Germany in 1928. While in this country he made a trip to Chicago to see the Ringling show and his interpreter that day was "Camel Dutch" Narfsky.

When I was with the Polack show in the 1960s, Barbara and I were invited to Parley Baer's home where he introduced me to Eddie Allen, who was then a Hollywood executive. We had a great day talking elephants, but when the subject of Safari came up he said it was a sad story. Evidently he had unknowingly come from the Detroit Zoo terminally ill from TB. He seemed to be fine



the first season, but gradually in 1936 he became more and more listless and toward the end of the season, moving back and forth from the train, Eddie had to drive him from horseback to make him keep up with the herd. Safari died on Thanksgiving Day in 1936 at the Rochester, Indiana winter quarters.

Some people think he died from eating an empty coke bottle someone had given him, but Allen was present when he died. He said the vets were amazed that he lived as long as he did since his lungs were almost eaten away. I have seen amazing things pass through elephants with no ill effects. I once saw one eat a uniform jacket and the next day the sleeve

was hanging out. After pulling it free, I discovered it still had the brass buttons.

The next picture shows the Sells-Floto Circus in the 1930s when my dad was with it and shows the elephants struggling in the Opelousas, Louisiana mud. Elephants are not as strong as horses, pound for pound, and lack the footing, but when a group of 10,000 pounders are placed in harness, the object they are pushing will either move or break.

As a last resort, these elephants would help the horses by pushing the wagon, but this must be done with caution since they can do more damage than good and if not positioned correctly, they will smash in the rear



door instead. More importantly, the elephant might be exposed to sharp objects or as in this case, the pins in the overhead poles, things the responsible elephant man had to be aware of. Elephants that did regular jobs on the lot like spotting cages in the menagerie wore a "push pad" that fit on its face for protection.

Traditionally, circuses that moved each day were quite resourceful at getting the job done somehow, even resorting to carrying in rigging and seats from the street by hand and showing outdoors. Only as a last resort would the date be lost.

I always thought that the sense of urgency in not missing a performance was due to the "show must go on" syndrome, but D. R. Miller explained it rather simply. The Kelly-Miller show was on the road x number of days making money and y number of days in winter quarters spending it.

When the show went on the road each year, added to its daily operating expenses was the amount estimated to maintain the show the following winter. The figure was prorated into each day's expenses and for each day lost the "nut" for the remainder of the season would

increase accordingly. He couldn't help adding that at the time we were with the show in the early 1950s, each year's total expenses had been met by the 4th of July.

I received this last photo of clown Albert White from Don Curtis. Ernie Burch told me that they once had a



big clown number on the Ringling show with a western theme with a fort erected in the center ring and most of the clowns wore those "hobby horse" outfits with the false legs. Some were cowboys, others Indians. Emmett Kelly had a feather in his derby and as usual wandered around doing things completely unrelated to the action going on. The number was concluded with an explosion and a cowboy dummy with angel wings going to the top of the tent.

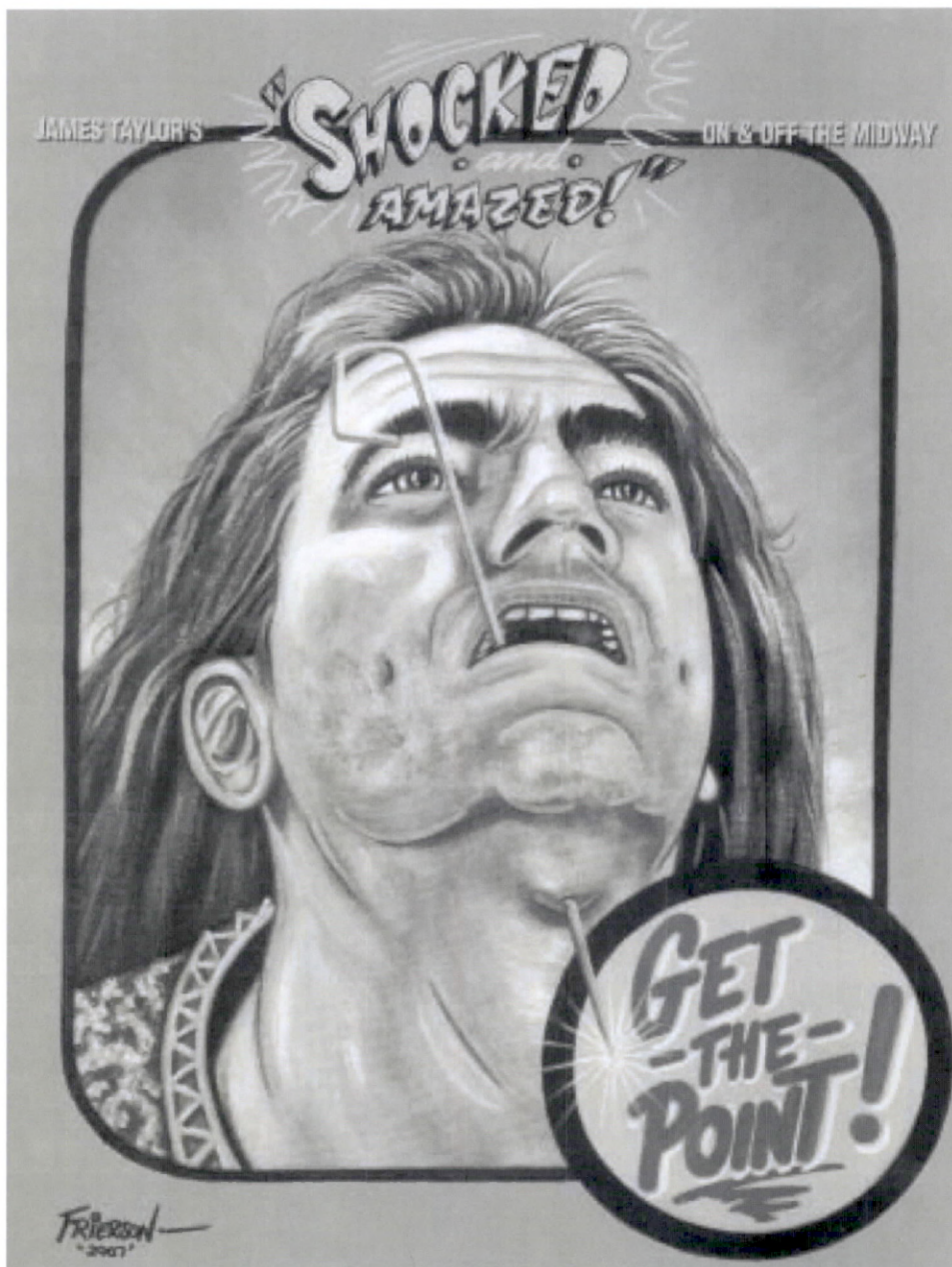
The highlight, however, was when a stagecoach entered pulled by a team of horses that stopped in front of the center ring by Ernie and a few more clowns dressed as bandits would hold up the stage coach.

Ernie said that one day the teamster let the hitch get away and while making the turn on the round end, rolled the coach over and dragged it upside down for a considerable distance before it could be stopped. After being extracted from the wreck, Albert, now in a state of general disarray, wig askew, and carrots awry, was helped to the back door and once outside began screaming, "MR. VALDO, MISTER VALDO ... I SHALL HENCEFORTH MAKE MY ENTRANCE AFOOT!"

When I was on the show in 1957 the clowns rehased the old firehouse gag. I was told it was the first time it had been used since the Hartford fire. They built a fireplug big enough to allow a midget to be concealed inside so when the fire truck entered, the little fireplug came trudging along behind. When they did the "Firemen, save my child" part, the mother clown would start to throw the baby to the rescue squad below, but after reflecting for a moment, she retreated into the house and returned with a TV set which she threw first, then she threw the baby. I even laughed at that one but of course, I have been blessed with a great sense of humor and laugh at many things.

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